

EXHIBIT 235

PART 1 OF 2

Stop the War

The story of Britain's biggest mass movement




Andrew Murray and Lindsey German
Foreword by Tony Benn

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biggest mass movement**

**Andrew Murray and
Lindsey German**



Andrew Murray has been the chair of the Stop the War Coalition since its foundation. He is the author of several books on British and world politics, and contributes regularly to the *Morning Star* and the *Guardian*. He works as director of campaigns and communications for the Transport and General Workers Union.

Lindsey German has been a socialist and campaigner for over 30 years. She has written books on women, war, imperialism and class. She was editor of *Socialist Review* magazine for many years, and is currently the convenor of the Stop the War Coalition.

Picture: Andrew and Lindsey at the Hyde Park rally,
15 February 2003

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HOW IT ALL BEGAN

This is not just another book about the Iraq war and its military, diplomatic and political history. Of those, there are plenty already. Instead, it is the story of a remarkable mass movement. Mass movements appear to come from nowhere, and they take a direction which is often unpredictable. They gather a momentum which sometimes appears unstoppable, and they can change the face of politics for a generation.

The Stop the War Coalition did this and more. The Coalition began as a grassroots movement, and its strength has remained at its roots. It started with no office, no bank account and just one full-time volunteer.

Its organisers came from a range of backgrounds, and were for the most part not known to each other when the movement began. Its only major resource was the energy, vitality and commitment of the tens of thousands who flocked to the meetings and protests which it organised around the country. Yet these people built and sustained the biggest mass movement ever seen in Britain — one which has created a series of political landmarks. It was thwarted in achieving its objective of stopping the attack on Iraq, but the government has been paying a political price ever since.

Over the past three years the Stop the War Coalition has organised:

- ✳️ The biggest demonstration in British history, when up to 2 million marched on 15 February 2003 on the eve of the war on Iraq.
- ✳️ The biggest ever weekday demonstration, when in excess of 300,000 people marched through London in November 2003 in protest at the state visit of George W Bush and at his warmongering policies.
- ✳️ The largest ever strike by school students, when tens of thousands walked out of school and gathered in town and city centres across the country on the day the war was launched.
- ✳️ One of the greatest ever days of direct action on the day war broke out, when people across Britain demonstrated, sat down in roads and stopped traffic, stopped work, occupied colleges and walked out of school.
- ✳️ The biggest ever anti-war demonstration held in wartime, on 22 March 2003, attended by hundreds of thousands.
- ✳️ The People's Assembly in March 2003, when more than 1,000 elected representatives spoke for the British people against war.
- ✳️ Help in coordinating the unprecedented movement of military families against the war.
- ✳️ A campaign which has mobilised British Muslims alongside the rest of the community as never before.

But the anti-war movement has not just been big. It has been right.

Almost every significant argument advanced by the Stop the War Coalition against the attack on Iraq has been conceded by the most authoritative sources within the pro-war party. The argument is over.

For example:

The issue of weapons of mass destruction, and the debate in the United Nations, was irrelevant — a cover for a war policy that had already been decided.

"The truth is that for reasons that have a lot to do with the US government bureaucracy we settled on the one issue that everyone could agree on, which was weapons of mass destruction as the core reason" — US deputy defence secretary Paul Wolfowitz, May 2003.¹

The suffering of the Iraqi people under Saddam was not the reason for the war.

"The criminal treatment of the Iraqi people...is a reason to help the Iraqis, but it's not a reason to put American kids' lives at risk" — Paul Wolfowitz, May 2003.²

The war was illegal under international law.

"I think in this case international law stood in the way of doing the right thing...international law...would have required us to leave Saddam Hussein alone" — Richard Perle, key Pentagon adviser, November 2003.³

George Bush was plotting to attack Iraq long before the 9/11 attacks.

"From the very beginning there was a conviction that Saddam Hussein...needed to go." — US Treasury secretary and Bush cabinet member Paul O'Neill.⁴

The decision to go to war with Iraq had nothing to do with tackling terrorism or Al Qaida.

"Any Iraqi 'link' to Al Qaida is a minor footnote when compared to the links with other regimes, and none of the possible 'links' between Iraq and Al Qaida rise to the level of noteworthy assistance and support" — US National Security Council anti-terrorism coordinator until March 2003 Richard Clarke.⁵

The occupation of Iraq would be opposed by the majority of the Iraqi people.

An opinion poll conducted by the US-run Coalition Provisional Authority in May 2004 found that 41 percent of the population wanted US troops to leave immediately, and a further 45 percent wanted them to leave with the formal transfer of authority one month later. US-led coalition forces had a confidence rating of just 10 percent.⁶

This may be small consolation, given that 100,000 people have died as a consequence of the war. But it is important to reassert the central point — the 2 million who marched (and the millions more with us in spirit) were right on every point.

THE ORIGINS OF THE STOP THE WAR COALITION

The movement has ensured that opposition to the war remains on top of the public agenda. It has mobilised repeatedly against the war, and now against the occupation and to bring the troops home. It has tried to build solidarity with the Iraqis, and has highlighted the numbers of Iraqi dead, the torture of prisoners, and the destruction of homes and livelihoods which continues under the occupation. Its spokespeople have been vilified as Saddam supporters, naive liberals or even traitors. It has received little recognition of its role, not even grudging acceptance from the government and media that it spoke for millions of people on the issue of war and peace. Yet its arguments have prevailed — the case for the war has now been largely discredited, and those of the anti-war movement have been vindicated. The British army has been forced to acknowledge publicly that the Stop the War Coalition has had an impact on levels of recruitment.⁷

The war remains the number one issue in British politics, the defining point of much political argument, the yardstick against which international policy, domestic spending and government priorities are judged.

How has such a powerful movement taken root? Our origins seemed anything but auspicious. The Stop the War Coalition was born out of one of the most remarkable historical events any of us has witnessed. The twin towers of New York's World Trade Centre were hit on 11 September 2001 in the early afternoon, British time. By early evening few in Britain could have missed the news or failed to view the terrible pictures: the huge gashes in the side of the skyscrapers; the shocking sight of

people leaping to their deaths rather than endure the flames; the firefighters racing to their own deaths shortly before the buildings collapsed. Quickly a consensus developed among governments that the suicide attacks were the work of the Al Qaida network, led by a rich Saudi, Osama Bin Laden. Bin Laden's wealth and ability to direct terrorist operations, his fanatical beliefs and position as erstwhile friend of the West who had turned into a ruthless enemy, smacked of the plot of a James Bond movie. But instead of the villain being caught by a daring secret service hero, at stake here was the future peace of the world.

It was apparent even as the buildings blazed in New York that the US would exact terrible revenge. The right of the US to "defend itself" was paramount in its political justification for what took place over the ensuing months, and was accepted by almost all governments in the world. Self-defence, it soon became clear, was not really self-defence at all, but a projected attack on any regime which defied the US. In the days following 11 September the Bush administration underlined its determination to attack Afghanistan, whose Taliban regime was accused of harbouring Al Qaida. The US also made clear it had other countries in its sights, especially the despotic regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq which had long been public enemy number one to Washington's neo-conservative strategists. The sanctions regime imposed on Iraq and the regular bombing by Britain and the US (heightened in 1998 by Operation Desert Fox) demonstrated the obsession with bringing Iraq under Anglo-American control.

All this posed a dilemma for anti-war campaigners who wished to stop war in Afghanistan and elsewhere. The attacks were so horrific and the US so determined to use them to further its foreign policy that it seemed hardly possible to build a substantial movement against this new "war on terror". Today, with up to 100,000 Iraqi civilians dead as a result of the occupation, and with Afghanistan as poor and war-torn as it was before the invasion, it is easy to forget the pressure which resulted from 11 September. The 3,000 dead from the attacks (and for months the figure was placed much higher), the poignant messages left on answering machines by those about to die, the sense of shock pervading much of US society, meant any challenge to the war consensus was greeted with amazement if not outright hostility.

But there had to be a challenge, even if — as some initially feared — the anti-war campaigners found themselves in a small minority. Al Qaida, the attacks and the growth of terrorism were not the result of actions by uniquely evil people, as often argued by the US and British governments. They were symptoms of major political problems in the world: the growing threat of a new imperialism which walked hand in hand with neo-liberal global capital; the injustices in Middle Eastern countries, stretching from the monarchies and dictatorships which ruled virtually all of them (usually backed by the West) to the occupation of Palestine by Israel; and the inequalities of the world which led increasing numbers of young people to see the Western powers as their enemy.

So the Stop the War Coalition was born in September 2001 to try to prevent still worse events taking place. From its inception the strength of the movement took even its most enthusiastic participants by surprise, and confounded those who predicted that no such anti-war movement could be built. Groups sprang up around the country, bringing together those who had previously campaigned against wars with people who had never participated in any political campaign. Its existence, growth and scale reflected the age of imperialism in which it was

born, and the rising discontent with the world's one remaining superpower and its loyal allies in the Blair government. This book tells the story of the movement.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

We begin by explaining the analysis which has underpinned the work of the Stop the War Coalition — in chapters dealing with US foreign policy and the "Bush doctrine", Tony Blair's new imperialism, and the history of Iraq and why it became a target. Of course, the analysis is the authors' own. Many people who support the anti-war movement would disagree on some points or place the emphasis elsewhere. Nevertheless, these views shaped the political judgement of the Coalition's leadership, and the rest of the story cannot be easily understood without them.

The second section of the book looks at the development of the Coalition itself — from the chaos of its early meetings to building support on the broadest basis ever seen for a left-led movement. Chapter Four discusses how the Coalition came into being, the importance of bringing together the left and the unions, the peace movement in the form of CND, the crucial role of the Muslim community in mobilising within the anti-war movement, and the campaign against the war in Afghanistan. Chapter Five deals with the intense public arguments between the government and the anti-war movement over attacking Iraq, and how the movement grew in scale and scope throughout 2002. It explains how the movement won the public relations battle, despite the gross mismatch in resources, and covers the first demonstration organised with the Muslim Association of Britain in September 2002, when the huge turnout first showed we had a real mass movement on our hands.

Chapter Six deals with the high point of the movement — the remarkable demonstration on 15 February 2003, the government's efforts to prevent it, and the great sweep of anti-war activity and opinion in the country at that time. It also looks at various tactical issues, and considers what could have done differently. Chapter Seven looks at the aftermath of the war — the triumphalism of the victors which quickly turned sour, the endless revelations of lies about weapons of mass destruction, the continuing campaign against the occupation, the defence of those who were witch-hunted, especially George Galloway, and the effort to get at the truth about what our government had said and done. It covers the Hutton inquiry and the dramatic protest against the visit of George Bush.

The third section deals with arguments and controversies around the politics of the Stop the War Coalition, and takes the story up to the end of 2004. Chapter Eight deals with the pro-war left — the shameful group who made their living churning out endless articles justifying war, and whose claims that they were on the left made them particularly useful to the war governments. Chapter Nine makes the case for the continuing importance of the anti-war movement, and assesses some more recent achievements and problems — the military families' campaign led by the courageous Rose Gentle and Reg Keys, the arguments among trade unions, and the continuing case for ending the occupation of Iraq.

The book is an attempt to record the history of the Stop the War Coalition in the hope that it will encourage those who opposed the war to continue to campaign against the occupation and against future wars. Of course, it reflects the perspective of the authors at the centre of the campaign. But this was and is a

movement of millions. To attempt to do justice to this fact, we include a broad range of snapshot contributions from some of those who contributed so much to the movement.

THE NATURE OF THE COALITION

The anti-war movement has made a major difference to British politics. At the very least, it has been responsible for mobilising on the streets, galvanising public opinion and ensuring the war has never been far from the surface of political debate. We have swept apathy away. But the Stop the War Coalition has made a difference in another way.

It is sometimes said of campaigns that they know what they are against, but it is much harder to see what they are for. In one sense, this is what mass campaigns should be about. They represent the coming together of different groups of people who may have seemingly little in common, but who are united around a particular aim. Sometimes the aim may be a change in the law or some other reform, but often it is to oppose an attack. This was the case with the Stop the War Coalition. However, the scale of the movement meant it became much more.

Although the Coalition's main aim was to stop an attack on Iraq, further demands were added at its founding meeting — against any racist backlash and in defence of civil liberties. These were of greater or lesser mobilising significance at different times, but they were one element in building major support among ethnic minority communities — especially the Muslim community, which felt particularly under attack and which has borne the brunt of the assault on civil liberties since 9/11.

The involvement of these sections of the community, the unity of purpose which the movement developed almost instantly (transcending many ancient animosities on the left), and the major political debates which dominated the news in the autumn and winter of 2001 meant the Stop the War Coalition became much more than a single-issue campaign. It took on the character of a transformative movement. In every locality, groups of people from diverse backgrounds and of all ages, from pensioners to school students, came together to campaign for peace. The movement harnessed the expertise of musicians, technicians, actors, fundraisers, lobbyists, IT workers, designers, stewards and organisers which would have cost tens of thousands of pounds if it had not been given voluntarily.

The Stop the War Coalition was always unlikely to be a short-lived or one-off movement. Its success in mobilising around the Afghan war was the first major test. But that success created new avenues of protest and stimulated new groups which wanted to join the campaign. The threat to Iraq, the subsequent war and the grisly occupation mean there has rarely been a pause in activity since. Now, more than three years after the "war on terror" began, the campaigning remains as urgent as ever. The war is open-ended, with new threats by the US administration to countries such as Iran and Syria, and with the deadly possibility of aggression against North Korea or even China in future. So the Stop the War Coalition has become much more of a permanent movement than was perhaps envisaged when it was set up. It has also become a transformative movement in the sense that it has helped to change British politics. It is now part of the debate in unions, political parties and religious communities, and central to the political culture of the left.

Those who argue that the Stop the War Coalition failed because it didn't stop the war against Iraq miss the point — we are fighting against a whole set of wars and imperial adventures. Unfortunately we have not seen the last of these, particularly after Bush's re-election. Our movement has to be prepared to continue as long as the danger of such wars hangs over humanity.

The suffragettes who fought for women to win the vote in Britain in the early 20th century had a decade of campaigning, including vicious repression, before their aims were even partially won. The US civil rights movement, which began in the 1950s in America's Deep South, took years — and much death and repression — to win even the most basic right for blacks to be treated equally with whites. The anti-war movement will have the same historical sweep, as millions around the world are forced to mobilise repeatedly against war, the poverty and inequality which breeds it, and the imperialism which launches it.

The Stop the War Coalition has helped to build a movement in Britain which has become one of the most significant in the world, as well as unique in our own history of protest. It has tried to hold to account a government which has proved to be George Bush's most loyal and willing ally. Its story is of a mass of people who went to the greatest lengths to stop a war and whom the government defied. We have continued to campaign and organise — not just as an anti-war movement, but as a movement of democratic assertion, speaking for the majority of the country on whom the majority of our elected representatives turned their backs. This movement — which has challenged government diktat over where and when we could march, battled against the view that "Muslim" equals potential terrorist, and campaigned for openness from a government which has lied — is a movement of the democratic millions.

At a time when apathy and cynicism envelop the formal democratic process, the story in these pages is of a potential for political renewal based on peace and democracy. We hope this book can play a part in strengthening and maintaining the movement for the challenges to come.

notes

- (1) US Department of Defence transcript of Paul Wolfowitz interview for *Vanity Fair*, 9 May 2003.
- (2) *Ibid.*
- (3) *Guardian*, 20 November 2003.
- (4) BBC News Online, 12 January 2004.
- (5) Richard Clarke, *Against All Enemies* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2004), p270.
- (6) Associated Press, 15 June 2004.
- (7) *Observer*, 19 December 2004.

who had been asked to speak from Birmingham Stop the War Coalition. It was clear, as one radio journalist pointed out to us afterwards, that Stop the War Coalition placards were widespread on the demo. Our first major test was the Coalition's first national demonstration in London on 18 November 2001. A flop would, perhaps, not have been surprising. The week before the march, Kabul fell to the rebranded "freedom fighters" of the Northern Alliance. The war, we were told, was over. There was nothing to stop. There was rejoicing, particularly among those liberals who had embraced the war on the terms offered by Bush and Blair, who had not looked behind the rhetoric, and who assumed the fall of the Taliban meant the end of the war.

It turned out 100,000 people knew better. That number marched through London to challenge the war policy, under the slogan "Not in my name". They included a very large number of Muslims — 30 coaches booked by the Birmingham Central Mosque alone. Headline speakers included campaigning journalist John Pilger, international human rights campaigner Bianca Jagger, veteran of the Labour left Tony Benn, and MPs George Galloway and Jeremy Corbyn, as well as activists from CND, the left and the Muslim community. Journalist Yvonne Ridley, who had been briefly imprisoned by the Taliban in Afghanistan, made the first of many appearances on our platforms.

The militancy and vibrancy of the march made clear that the attack on Afghanistan had created the possibility for an anti-war movement of far greater range and reach than any previous such campaign. It also led to the *Guardian* abandoning its previous eccentric policy of not covering demonstrations.

The demonstration only appears small by the scale of subsequent mobilisations against the Iraq war. At the time, it was the biggest peace demonstration for more than 15 years, and the largest left-led protest since New Labour's election to government in 1997. It had been organised by an organisation barely six weeks old. Ministers were reported to be surprised and concerned. Nevertheless, it could all have stopped there, had Bush and Blair stopped at Afghanistan.

notes

- (1) It is true that political Islam, while rooted in the culture and experience of the Muslim world, was initially brought to political life by the US, primarily as a tool against the secular left in the Middle East and against the Soviet Union. The Israeli government likewise sponsored the creation of Islamic political groups in the Occupied Territories as a weapon against the secular PLO. However, political Islam has long since turned to bite the hand that fed it in many parts of the world. It has expressed, in however warped a fashion, some of the anti-imperialist demands which were once the preserve of the Communist and nationalist movements of the region. It has not done so in the name of socialism or secular progress, although it has taken a different colouring in different countries, some more reactionary and some more reformist.
- (2) Details in Michael Griffin, *Guardian*, 16 November 2001.
- (3) John Pilger, *Daily Mirror*, 29 October 2001; see also Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban* (London: IB Tauris, 2000) for background on oil politics.
- (4) *Guardian*, 12 February 2004.
- (5) *New York Times*, 9 July 2004.
- (6) Estimates of Marc Herold, University of New Hampshire, at pubpages.unh.edu/mwherold
- (7) Jonathan Steele, *Guardian*, 13 November 2003.
- (8) *Times*, 27 September 2001.
- (9) *Guardian*, 15 July 2004.

CHAPTER FIVE: HEARTS AND MINDS

From George Bush's State of the Union speech in January 2002, announcing the existence of the Iraq/Iran/North Korea "axis of evil", until the invasion of Iraq 14 months later, an immense battle was fought for public opinion around the world. On one side was the vast propaganda apparatus of the US and British governments, on the other the arguments of the mobilised peace movement. This was, categorically, the war Bush and Blair lost.

In almost every country there were, by March 2003, clear majorities against the planned war. Those governments that sent soldiers to die for Bush did so against the wishes of their own peoples. Those governments which stood out against the war rode a wave of domestic support.

This period began with the sole superpower throwing down a gauntlet to the rest of the world. It ended with the birth of what Patrick Tyler in the *New York Times* famously described as a second superpower — international public opinion.

The Stop the War Coalition had, of course, scant resources to match Downing Street's spin machine. At the outset we had two volunteer press officers.

The first was Andrew Burgin, a second-hand bookseller with considerable energy and enthusiasm, expended in many directions, as ready to give an interview on his mobile phone to a Turkish radio station as to brief a BBC political correspondent. His contribution to the Coalition has ranged far beyond media work. In the course of the campaign he was also deeply involved in mobilising support among the creative community, and more recently in helping develop the military families' movement.

Others played a big part in the Coalition's successful media operation at one time or another — including Mike Marqusee, who also helped form Media Workers Against the War, Carmel Brown, an effervescent radio producer from Merseyside who gave the Coalition's media work a certain "wow" factor, Ian Willmore and, most recently, experienced broadcast journalist Niall Sookoo. They could all now legitimately put on their CVs that they defeated, in an all-out propaganda war, the legendary PR operation run by Alastair Campbell and New Labour's high command. Of course, they did have a better hand to play.

THE BUILD-UP

The Stop the War Coalition held a protest march in the spring of 2002 which drew 20,000 people around the slogan "Don't attack Iraq" — as it turned out, at the very time Blair was secretly committing the country to war. The anti-war movement regarded this as a highly respectable figure given that the Taliban regime had fallen and there was no immediate threat of further war. Within a year, 100 times that number turned out in the biggest demonstration ever seen on the streets of Britain. In those intervening months Iraq became the dominant issue affecting British politics. There can rarely have been a war which was so discussed and contested before it happened. An understanding of why this was must start with the simple fact that a group of people in control of the US government wanted to go to war, were determined to go to war, and would do everything they could to make the facts fit their predetermined conclusion — in short, to lie.

To many in the Bush administration the target had always been Iraq. Right after 11 September Pentagon boss Donald Rumsfeld and his deputy Paul Wolfowitz pressed for an attack on the country, even though there was no proven or likely connection between Saddam Hussein's regime and Al Qaida. Just hours following the attack on the Pentagon, Rumsfeld's notes of a discussion with his aides show him already contemplating attacking Iraq as well as Bin Laden.

Between Christmas and new year 2001-02, while the US was still heavily embroiled in the aftermath of the Afghan war, General Tommy Franks travelled to Bush's ranch in Crawford, Texas, to give a detailed briefing on what a war with Iraq would entail. Bush told the press, "We just got off a teleconference with the national security team to discuss his trip and to discuss what's taking place in Afghanistan." He didn't mention that the main topic of the teleconference was Iraq.¹

Britain was brought into the plan relatively early. In April 2002 Tony Blair met George Bush at the Crawford ranch. Bush gave an interview with ITN's Trevor McDonald during which he stated, "I made up my mind that Saddam has to go".² It was on that visit that prime minister and president decided definitively to go to war with Iraq: "The only points left open were the timing and the terms".³ That weekend Blair and his foreign policy adviser David Manning decided that Bush was going to war and they had better be with him: "For all the talk over the next several months that nothing had been decided, Blair and his aides knew that military action was — barring a miracle such as a popular uprising or a last-minute change of heart by Saddam — all but inevitable. Publicly, Blair said nothing of the sort, to his cabinet, his party or his diplomats".⁴ He said nothing of the sort to the British people either.

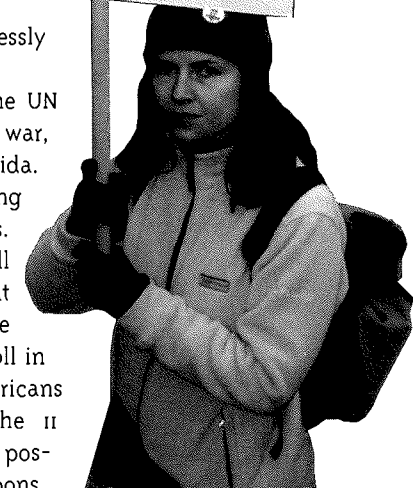
FOOLING THE PEOPLE?

Now the problem was to sell war on Iraq. Even for George Bush, this was not easy. Two main arguments were put forward. The first was that Saddam's regime was linked with terrorism. Unfortunately for Bush there was little evidence of this. The attacks on the US on 11 September 2001 were presumed to be organised by Osama Bin Laden and his Al Qaida network. There was no connection between that network and Saddam Hussein's Iraq. Indeed, politically and ideologically, Bin Laden and Saddam Hussein were poles apart.

This did not stop the assertions — that Saddam gave money to suicide bombers in Palestine (he sent money to families who lost members in the intifada) and that Al Qaida members were operating in Iraq. Attempts to create evidence of such linkage, by claiming that one of the key hijackers, Mohammed Atta, had met an Iraqi agent in Prague before the attacks, were made early on. The story of Atta and the Iraqi was endlessly recycled by right-wing commentators, and was at least tacitly encouraged by the US government. *Newsweek* magazine reported it six weeks after 11 September, and conservative *New York Times* columnist William Safire repeated the claim in November 2001. Condoleezza Rice and Dick Cheney refused to rule out the meeting when questioned on it in the months following the 11 September attacks. The story was reheated once more in the summer of 2002 as the US government upped the volume of war rhetoric. The right-wing *Weekly Standard* joined the fray, claiming that the Czech ambassador to the US had backed up the story. Within a week, however, CIA director George Tenet said he could find no evidence of the meeting, and the *New York Times* reported that Czech president Vaclav Havel had phoned the White House earlier in the year to say the story was not true.⁵ Even though the story had proved to be false, this didn't prevent the US government and its allies endlessly repeating it.⁶

When Colin Powell presented evidence to the UN Security Council in February 2003, in the run-up to war, he stressed again the Iraqi regime's links to Al Qaida. This time he steered away from the Prague meeting but talked about Iraq harbouring Al Qaida terrorists. Again the evidence was shaky in the extreme, but all of this had one aim — to convince most people that there was a link, even if no one could actually prove it. In the US this ploy worked extremely well. A poll in October 2002 showed that 66 percent of Americans thought Saddam Hussein was involved in the 11 September attacks, while 79 percent thought Iraq possessed, or was close to possessing, nuclear weapons.

MY MUM READS
THE DAILY MAIL
AND EVEN SHE
SAYS: DON'T
ATTACK IRAQ



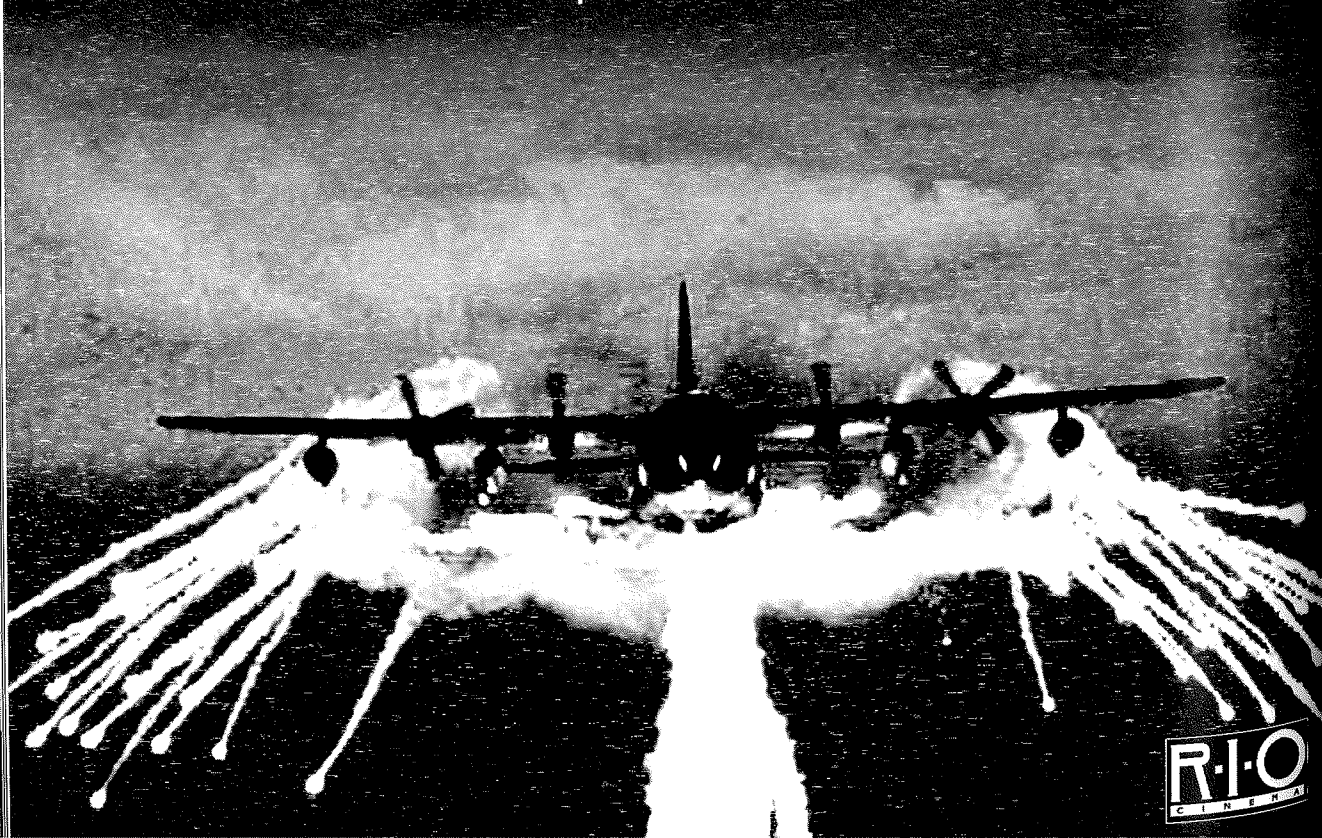
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NOT IN MY NAME[®]

The truth about Afghanistan and the 'War Against Terror'
 Bush & Blair don't want you to see

4pm Saturday 8th June at the Rio Cinema, 107 Kingsland High Street, E8
 Followed by a public discussion with Jeremy Corbyn MP and Lindsay German from
 the national Stop the War Coalition • £2.50/£1.50



RIO
CINEMA

A POLITICAL POWER TOOL

Not In My Name is a documentary film – the most important I have ever been involved with. We took the decision to make the film before the dust had even settled after the attacks on the US on 11 September 2001. We didn't know exactly what the film was going to be about – but we just knew we had to make it.

While I and my partner, Christine Tongue, helped him, the man who did the hard work on *Not In My Name* was Chris Reeves of Platform Films. Chris has been making radical films for going on 25 years, and his experience shines through every frame – just as well, because we had no money, no prospect of being shown on broadcast television, just a sense that “we had to do it”.

The film tells the story of the beginnings of the US's “war on terror” and the attack on Afghanistan, and forecasts what America's “war on terror” would mean to the world at large.

But *Not In My Name* was more than a well-made documentary. It was a political power tool. Groups and individuals throughout Britain and the world grabbed the film and used it to help spread awareness and build campaigns. It played to packed independent cinemas, church halls, community centres – anywhere that

people could meet that had a TV or a video projector. And it didn't just appeal to the “usual suspects”. There are people who will come to see a film where they'd be far less likely to attend a political meeting. And they came in their droves to see *Not In My Name*.

Of course, it would be stupid to overestimate what an anti-war film can do. *Not In My Name* couldn't stop the Americans invading Iraq. And Michael Moore's *Fahrenheit 9/11* couldn't stop Bush getting himself re-elected president. But films help to educate people, help to inspire people, help to keep faith alive – and we've got to keep on making them. That's why we've formed a non-profit group called the Independent Media Society – and we need people to get involved. If you're interested e-mail tv.choice@virgin.net or phone 01843 604 253.

Norman Thomas
*independent film-maker
 with the Independent
 Media Society*

A poll early in 2003 showed that people thought at least one hijacker was Iraqi, although they were all Saudis or Egyptians.⁷

If, in the US, the abuse of power could at least fool most of the people some of the time, Blair was finding it harder going. The main argument for going to war deployed in Britain was not this connection with Al Qaida, which was never accepted as widely as in the US, but the supposed threat that Iraq posed. It was alleged Saddam Hussein was in possession of deadly weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Saddam had used chemical and biological weapons during the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s, the argument went, and Iraq was developing such weapons further. It was also developing nuclear weapons capacity. Tony Blair made clear these were the *only* reasons which could be used to justify war — because they were the only ones with any hope at all of giving the enterprise a semblance of legality.

These claims were heavily contested. Many who had opposed the sanctions inflicted on Iraq since the end of the first Gulf War in 1991 thought that a country which had been defeated in war, and had seen its citizens become poorer, sicker, and less well educated and fed in the following decade, could hardly be the threat that was claimed. In addition, there had been repeated and substantial bombing of Iraq (especially in December 1998 when US president Bill Clinton launched Operation Desert Fox, with British government support). There had been widespread UN weapons inspections until Desert Fox, when inspectors were withdrawn immediately before the bombing. (Appearing on the BBC's *Newsnight* early in 2003, Blair was discomfited to be caught out in the fib that Saddam had thrown the inspectors out — the decision was, in fact, Clinton's.) While it was true that Saddam Hussein had used chemical weapons previously, and that he had wanted to obtain nuclear weapons, the constraints on his regime since 1991 made his continued possession of such weapons much less likely than when he had been a favoured ally of the West.

Such assumptions were backed up by a number of witnesses who should know. Scott Ritter, former UNSCOM inspector in Iraq, said in July 2002 that virtually all Saddam's weapons were accounted for, and that all except mustard agent would have degraded within five years: "We did ascertain a 90 to 95 percent level of verified disarmament".⁸ The US's main evidence — provided by a defector, Saddam's son in law Hussein Kamel — in fact reinforced this point, with his assertion that Iraq had destroyed all its weapons after the end of the first Gulf War.⁹

None of this stopped Bush lying about the existence of such weapons. His "axis of evil" speech was based on the assertion that these weapons existed because Saddam had not disarmed after the Gulf War in 1991. Yet there was evidence from at least some people who had been on the ground that disarmament had taken place. Even if some WMD remained, the return of the UN weapons inspectors should have been able to ascertain what was there and where it was. To most people,

containment of Saddam Hussein seemed to be working, and it was only by raising the spectre of undisclosed weapons of horror that Saddam could be seen as a threat.

There were, in any case, wider questions relating to weapons of mass destruction. Britain and the US had armed Iraq throughout the 1980s: "A secret Ministry of Defence report declared in June 1988, three months after Halabja, 'UK Ltd is helping

Iraq, often unwillingly, but sometimes not, to set up a major indigenous arms industry.' Granted that Saddam was a monster, he had been 'our' monster during the 1980s, when Western policy in the Middle East was dominated by the imperative of isolating and weakening the Iranian Revolution. Had he used WMD against the US and its allies in either the 1991 or the 2003 wars, it would then have been a spectacular case of blowback".¹⁰ The questions went much further than the Iraqi regime and its possession or otherwise of such weapons. Nuclear weapons are acknowledged to be in the possession of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council. Other countries such as India, Pakistan and Israel are known to have nuclear weapons. In addition, "Equating WMD with nuclear, chemical and biological weapons tacitly legitimises the highly destructive 'conventional' weapons increasingly monopolised by the Pentagon".¹¹

The arguments about weapons were nonetheless used as the main justification for going to war, and they were further embellished throughout the rest of 2002. Bush followed his "axis of evil" speech with an equally strong statement which made absolutely clear that the US was going after other supposed "rogue states" in order to assert its world dominance. This was his theory of "pre-emptive intervention". First given an airing at a speech to West Point military academy in June that year, the doctrine held that the US had to reserve the right to attack those it saw as a potential threat before it was threatened.

Bush said, "For much of the last century, America's defence relied on the Cold War doctrines of deterrence and containment. In some cases, these strategies still apply. But new threats also require new thinking. Deterrence — the promise of massive retaliation against nations — means nothing against shadowy terrorist networks with no nation or citizens to defend. Containment is not possible when unbalanced dictators with weapons of mass destruction can deliver those weapons on missiles or secretly provide them to terrorist allies.

"We cannot defend America and our friends by hoping for the best. We cannot put our faith in the word of tyrants, who solemnly sign non-proliferation treaties and then systematically break them. If we wait for threats to fully materialise, we will have waited too long".¹²

Here, couched in the language of the script for a Hollywood thriller with its talk of unaccountable terrorists and dictators who would sell secret weapons to those terrorists, was Bush's war plan. The Bush doctrine spelt out what had already been highlighted in January — the US was prepared to invade and bomb countries on the basis of a perceived threat (real or imaginary). It hardly took a genius to work out that the supposed threat from Saddam Hussein's Iraq would be used to justify a war to change the regime.

The doctrine tore up much of international law established after the Second World War. While dissenting opinion in the US and governments in many other parts of the world stressed that Saddam's supposed possession of WMD could be dealt with by a return of UN weapons inspectors, the Bush administration wanted to close off or discount that option. Secretary of State Colin Powell made the point:

"US policy is that, regardless of what the inspectors do, the people of Iraq and the people of the region would be better off with a different regime in Baghdad. The United States reserves its option to do whatever it believes might be appropriate to see if there can be a regime change".¹³

Blair was keen to support the increasingly belligerent Bush policy, but he had



to run to keep up. The Americans had already pencilled in a war for the winter of 2002-03 and were determined to fit the facts to that timetable. In spring 2002 Bush told three US senators who were visiting Condoleezza Rice, "Fuck Saddam. We're taking him out".¹⁴

BLAIR BELEAGUERED

It was not so easy for Blair. There was much less political appetite for war in Britain than in the US. The movement against the Afghan war had already helped build a strong current of anti-war opinion. Most mainstream opinion was not persuaded there was a case for war rather than containment, or that Saddam was an immediate threat to Britain. It was obvious to both Blair and Jack Straw that Britain would only be able to enter the war with a UN resolution backing it. Much British governmental and diplomatic effort went into achieving such a resolution. At the same time, the government was conscious that it was not winning the argument.

It began to turn to the first of many "Plan Bs" to be used in the coming months and years. The government started developing its argument about the uniquely hideous and dictatorial nature of the Iraqi regime. Blair personally began to lean more heavily on a moral justification. Of course, stressing this line of argument required expecting the public to believe that the prime minister was on a superior moral plane to, say, Nelson Mandela and the Pope, both of whom spoke out loud and clear against war.

Moral or no, the government still had to get round the difficult fact that Britain could only legally attack Iraq if Britain was under threat directly from Saddam. Proof of that threat, therefore, needed to be conjured up.

As early as March 2002 Blair and his advisers floated the idea of a dossier of intelligence and other material which would strengthen their hand with MPs and the British public. According to John Kampfner:

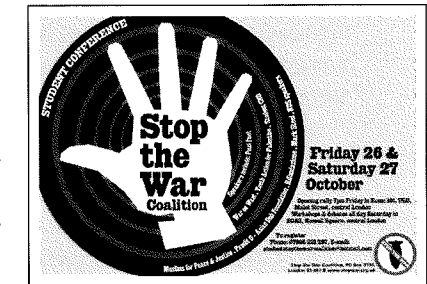
"Blair was becoming increasingly agitated by all the questions, from party activists, members of the public and MPs. Why Iraq? Why now? He told Manning [his foreign policy adviser] he needed an intelligence-based dossier".¹⁵ In fact the dossier was initially postponed, probably for two reasons. One was that Blair felt it would make people think war was imminent and possibly create a bigger anti-war movement. The second was that the evidence provided in the dossier was so thin it would not stand up to scrutiny.¹⁶

Debate raged throughout the summer of 2002. But the world's most powerful government and its closest ally, having determined to go to war, now found themselves up against implacable opposition — anti-war campaigners in the US and Britain joined forces with campaigners against sanctions, pro-Palestine protesters, those who believed the war was about globalisation and oil, and those who just didn't believe much that their governments told them. With every shift of argument, the government found more of the public arrayed against its war policy.

Doubtless to their surprise, the pro-war governments were finding themselves on the defensive. Saddam didn't obey the UN? Well, Israel flouted UN resolutions with impunity in its oppression of the Palestinians. Iraq was a dictatorship? So were many other regimes, including in the Middle East, which were backed by the West. The Iraqi people were suffering? But they also suffered from the Anglo-American bombing and sanctions. So the arguments raged back and forth.

World politics were polarising around this question. The increasingly bellicose language of the US and British governments mobilised some support — notably the right-wing prime ministers of Italy and Spain, Silvio Berlusconi and Jose Maria Aznar (but not their people). But it repelled more, including other European governments. Those who had opposed the war in Afghanistan found scant evidence that the situation really had improved, and Bin Laden had not been apprehended. Instead, Bush now tried to forget about Afghanistan in pursuit of the greater prize of Iraq. This heightened the feeling that Washington and London were guilty of hypocrisy in their "war on terror".

Meanwhile, Ariel Sharon's policies in attacking the Palestinians had provoked protests worldwide, especially in Britain. A huge, largely Muslim, demonstration at the time of the Jenin massacre in April 2002, organised by the Muslim Association of Britain, reinforced these anti-war arguments. Another substantial march organised by the Palestine Solidarity Campaign took place in May. The Stop the War Coalition found itself at the centre of a growing political mood. Public meetings up and down the country played an educational and mobilising role, and were swelling in size. In addition, the Coalition organised regular "teach-ins" and educational meetings to discuss the underlying issues behind the war danger, alongside mass meetings and rallies in all parts of the country, building demonstrations and putting the political arguments. These teach-ins and rallies contributed not just to the success of mass mobilisations — they also underlie the Coalition's political unity, which has survived repeated attack from diverse supporters of the war and the government. National and local trade unions, community groups and Muslim and civil rights organisations also began to affiliate to the Stop the War Coalition.



THE DODGY DOSSIER

How could the Blair government create a popular momentum for war? Perhaps by a smoke and mirrors operation — thus it resurrected a ploy which must have seemed a good idea at the time. The government's postponed dossier, *Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction*, published in September 2002, brought together the intelligence gathering of MI6 with the spinning techniques of Alastair Campbell in a document which enjoyed fairly limited credibility on its first publication — and went downhill from there.

Much was promised of the dossier. Claims that it contained evidence which would destroy the anti-war argument had to be taken seriously. This was the government's case for war. Such was the fanfare around the dossier that it was closely embargoed prior to publication, with MPs only allowed sight of it early on the morning that it was to be debated in parliament.

Jeremy Corbyn, Labour MP for Islington North, was a strong supporter of the Stop the War Coalition from the beginning, speaking at meetings all over the country and contributing to the work of the Coalition's leadership in every way possible. He volunteered to read the main points and contact us so that we could rebut anything which we thought undermined the anti-war case. Within a couple of hours he

phoned with the view that there was little to worry about — the dossier was a mixture of supposition, exaggeration and questionable facts, and would not sway opinion among our supporters.

Of course, the aim of the dossier was not primarily to convince anti-war campaigners that they were wrong — it was to create a climate in which most people in Britain would so fear the threat from Saddam Hussein that they would be willing to back a war against Iraq. A government dossier sounded official and authoritative. It contained a foreword by the prime minister, it was illustrated with maps, pictures of weapons facilities and weapons themselves, and it contained a number of eye-catching facts and assertions designed to be easily accessible via the mass media.

Most notorious of these was the claim — highlighted in yellow marker in some press copies of the dossier — that "Iraq's military forces are able to use chemical and biological weapons, with command, control and logistical arrangements in place. The Iraqi military are able to deploy these weapons within 45 minutes of a decision to do so".¹⁷ The London *Evening Standard* reproduced the claim in banner headlines the same day, as did many national papers the following morning.

The dossier was also designed to convince parliament that there was a real threat. Unfortunately this proved not too difficult at every stage. An official government publication, issued only hours before a debate, "spun" excessively by government and presented alongside dark hints that there was far more intelligence than we were being allowed to see had the desired effect on most MPs, who did little to scrutinise or question what they were told. The same can be said of much of the media. The dossier was accepted by the mainstream as the intelligence basis for going to war.

Tony Blair's foreword set the tone: "In recent months, I have been increasingly alarmed by the evidence from inside Iraq that...Saddam Hussein is continuing to develop WMD... I am in no doubt that the threat is serious and current, that he has made progress on WMD, and that he has to be stopped... The document discloses that his military planning allows for some of the WMD to be ready within 45 minutes of an order to use them".¹⁸

The dossier was divided into three parts. The first comprised the supposed evidence of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons. Much of the details about Iraq's weapons programmes were dredged up from the past — the effect of chemical weapons, the terrible attack on the Kurds at Halabja during the Iran-Iraq war, and Iraq's history of chemical and biological weapon research going back to the 1970s. It was clear from the dossier that there was little new intelligence of any sort since Clinton's withdrawal of the weapons inspectors in 1998, and that what was now gathered together was based on particular (and, as it turned, out false) assumptions — that certain weapons were unaccounted for according to the final UNSCOM report in 1999, and that Saddam was still secretly building weapons. Most of the conclusions about current weapons capabilities have been shown to be false or simple supposition — that equipment was being dispersed or concealed, that there existed a useable capability, or that Scud missiles were ready to attack Cyprus, Israel or Turkey, as well as the notorious 45-minute claim. We were told, "Saddam continues to attach great importance to the possession of weapons of mass destruction," which may provide an insight into Saddam Hussein's mind, but is not evidence of any weapons.¹⁹

The evidence on nuclear weapons was designed to create scary headlines. Admitting that Iraq did not have nuclear weapons or the immediate capacity to develop them, the best the dossier could come up with was, "If Iraq obtained fissile

material and other essential components from foreign sources, the timeline for production of a nuclear weapon would be shortened, and Iraq could produce a nuclear weapon in between one and two years".²⁰

At the same time, the government and media highlighted the supposed fact that "there is intelligence that Iraq has sought the supply of significant quantities of uranium from Africa".²¹ This referred to the claim that Iraq had bought uranium from the African state of Niger — a claim dismissed as based on forged documents by the International Atomic Energy Authority only months later.²²

The second and third sections of the dossier were on the history of weapons inspection and Iraq under Saddam Hussein. These quoted selectively to stress Iraq's non-compliance with weapons inspections, using the testimony of Richard Butler.²³ Maps of Saddam's presidential sites or palaces appeared with a map of Buckingham Palace superimposed to show how much bigger the Iraqi palaces were, suggesting that they must conceal illicit weapons (a map of Balmoral or Sandringham might have told a different story).²⁴

Similarly, the third section detailed human rights abuses, including a section on Saddam's abuses in Abu Ghraib prison, which could have been written about the torture in the prison today under the Americans.²⁵ The aim of much of the dossier was simply to provide evidence of the undeniably dictatorial nature of the regime, in the absence of any real evidence of weapons which could threaten Britain.

An alternative analysis was provided by Dr Glen Rangwala, a young Cambridge academic who wrote a parliamentary briefing on Iraq's WMD for Labour Against the War, an affiliate to the Stop the War Coalition which campaigns among Labour Party members and Labour MPs, and is chaired by campaigning stalwart Alan Simpson.

Dr Rangwala's briefing found "little evidence to suggest that Iraq retains extensive WMD capacities".²⁶ It pointed out there was little evidence of non-compliance with weapons inspectors either. The then-chairman of UNSCOM, Rolf Ekeus, had reported to the UN Security Council in 1997 that "not much is unknown about Iraq's retained proscribed weapons capabilities".²⁷ Ekeus further claimed in May 2000 that "in all areas we have eliminated Iraq's capabilities fundamentally".²⁸

Former arms inspector Scott Ritter wrote in June 2000, "It was possible as early as 1997 to determine that, from a qualitative standpoint, Iraq had been disarmed. Iraq no longer possessed any meaningful quantities of chemical or biological agent, if it possessed any at all".²⁹

The dossier made hardly a dent in the argument against starting a war. Perhaps the most interesting point about its reception was not how many people believed its evidence, but how many people did not. A combination of challenges to the "evidence", advanced by those with access to the media, and the growth of the anti-war movement in Britain meant the government's case was lost even as it was presented.

UNITY WITH MAB

September 2002 marked a turning point in the movement, which gained in confidence as the case for war looked shakier. At the beginning of the summer, the Stop the War Coalition had decided to call a demonstration to coincide with the opening of the Labour Party conference. The demonstration was planned in London for 28 September, the day before the conference was due to begin in Blackpool.

The theme of the protest was once more to be "Don't attack Iraq", a slogan agreed by the officers at a meeting in Cafe Rouge in Hampstead (meetings were often held there initially, near to Andrew Murray's office at Aslef, because it was usually quiet). We were confident this would strike a chord with far greater numbers of people than had marched in the spring, given the heightened awareness around the issue. We were contacted by the Muslim Association of Britain, organisers of the major Palestine solidarity demonstration in the spring, to say that they had planned a demo to mark the anniversary of the "second intifada" in Palestine — also in London on the same day. Could we find a way of coming together?

This was a challenge for everyone. Most people in the Stop the War Coalition had no problem with linking over the two issues. We had ourselves campaigned on Palestine, organising a march and rally in January outside the Israeli embassy on one of the wettest days of the year. So it was felt we could easily combine the two slogans.

But we had never worked with MAB, and there was some hesitation and nervousness, no doubt on both sides. However, in the interests of building the biggest possible protest which could have a real impact on the Labour Party and hence on government policy, we decided to go ahead in unity. MAB wanted to model the demonstration on the "Million Man March" in Washington some years earlier organised by Louis Farrakhan. The Stop the War Coalition opposed that slogan on two grounds — one, that it should be a million people of both sexes (which was readily accepted by MAB), and two, that we would never mobilise a million people to demonstrate in Britain, and we would be setting ourselves up to fail. It turned out that while we were right about the September 2002 protest, one million men did indeed march the following February — one million women, too. Understandably, MAB has not let us forget this — the optimism of those new to organising protests in Britain trumped the scepticism of the veteran campaigners!

MAB, PALESTINE AND ANTI-SEMITISM

At this stage it is worthwhile examining the interlinked questions of Palestine and the Stop the War Coalition's relationship with the Muslim Association of Britain. This has led to a good deal of comment, some of it ill-informed and prejudiced. The leadership of the Coalition is proud of its association with MAB, and the underlying issues should be clarified in order, hopefully, to strengthen the basis for continuing political cooperation between the left and British Muslims.

More than any other single issue, Palestine excites the passion of Muslims, in Britain and elsewhere. Of course, not only Muslims are interested in the question. But the injustice done to the Palestinians since 1948, and particularly since 1967, burns most deeply among Arab and Muslim peoples. For the majority, the state of Israel is nothing but theft, no more or less a colonial enterprise than any other settler state implanted in the Third World. Pragmatism leads many, in Britain as in Palestine itself (notably the PLO leadership), to accept a two-state solution based on the 1967 borders as the only realistic foundation for peace. But the killings and injustices, large and small, which the Israeli occupiers visit on a near-helpless population in the Occupied Territories is both a standing affront to the sensibilities of their co-religionists and a condemnation of the policies of the US government, which sustains

and underwrites this policy with barely a murmur of dissent from its British ally. This on its own, even without any aggravating factors such as further attacks against countries with a Muslim population, tends to alienate large numbers of British Muslims from the US government and, increasingly, from their own as well.

From the beginning, the Stop the War Coalition identified the need for freedom for the Palestinians as an essential component of any broader peace with justice in the Middle East. This took no special insight on our part. Commentators of every stripe identified the bleeding wound of Palestine as the main question mobilising support for Al Qaida, and alienating millions of Muslims and Arabs from the US and Britain.

When Jane Shallice, the Coalition's treasurer, and Andrew Murray met two leaders of the Board of Deputies of British Jews a year later, the sticking point in our discussion was the latter's demand that the anti-war movement entirely disassociate itself from the Palestinian question and drop any Palestinian-related slogan from our marches. Their argument was that the two issues had nothing to do with each other. We could only reply that if they believed this they were the only people in the world who did. Even George Bush, with his last-minute "road map for peace" in Palestine, cobbled together days before the invasion of Iraq and abandoned shortly afterwards, acknowledged the connection. On the other hand, such popularity as Saddam Hussein enjoyed in the Arab world was due to his rhetorical intransigence over the Palestinian cause. It could not be overlooked, either, that the most vociferous supporter of the Bush-Blair policy towards Iraq was the Israeli government, always anxious to see any potentially powerful Arab state and army reduced to ruins, the better that its colonisation of the Occupied Territories and oppression of the Palestinians should proceed unimpeded.

The second intifada, provoked by Ariel Sharon's visit to the Al Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem in September 2000, raised feelings on the Palestinian issue to boiling point once more. It was in connection with the Palestinian issue that the Stop the War Coalition first came into contact with MAB, which had affiliated to the Coalition nationally (some members having already worked with the Islington Stop the War Coalition), and took the lead in organising the demonstration on the Palestinian question in London in April 2002. The Coalition supported the march, which attracted up to 80,000 demonstrators, mainly Muslim. It was clear from this that MAB was taking the lead in trying to introduce a more assertive Muslim intervention in British politics, particularly around international issues. We were pleased to start working with it, meeting both at its offices in Finsbury Park and at a hotel in Willesden owned by Yussuf Islam (the former Cat Stevens). Mohammed Sarwala and Anas Altikriti, among others, led for MAB in these discussions.

MAB has been subjected to an enormous amount of abuse from the pro-war party and its press





PALESTINE AND THE STOP THE WAR MOVEMENT

The anti-war movement soon became also a protest against the Israeli occupation of Palestine and the Israeli maltreatment of Palestinians that had started long before. For me as a Palestinian, this was one of the most striking aspects of the Stop the War movement.

In 30 years of political activism in Britain on behalf of the Palestinian cause, I can remember no comparable time when the Palestinian issue gained such prominence. Many of us who worked in this cause were always struck by the lack of an anti-Zionist campaign akin to the anti-apartheid movement of the 1970s and 1980s.

And then, without even trying, there was the Palestine issue centre-stage in the campaign against the Iraq war and occupation. In the mass demonstration of 2 million people which took place in London in February 2003, the most remarkable feature was the prominence of Palestinian flags and pro-Palestinian slogans. There were as many of these as ones about Iraq. Of course, this should have been no surprise, for the link between the two issues is clear in the minds of all Arabs, and now of their Western sympathisers as well, it seems. The Arab and Islamic worlds drew the lesson that the US (and Israel) are irremediably anti-Arab and anti-Islam. Few Muslims believe that the attacks on Afghanistan and Iraq were anything but

attacks on Muslims, aimed at controlling the Islamic world's people and resources. For these populations, already incensed by their historical subjugation at the hands of the West, Palestine epitomises all this – injustice, exploitation and subordination of a native people for the benefit of a hegemonic, Western-style, Zionist colonialist movement.

I remember visiting Pakistan in early 2003 and witnessing at first hand people's frenetic devotion to the Palestine cause, as if it had been their own. They identified with the Palestinians as tormented fellow Muslims – not of course accurate, since many Palestinians are Christian and the anti-Zionist struggle is not a religious one – but the power of this allegiance was undiminished by such considerations. 60 percent of the population of the Arab and Islamic worlds is under the age of 30, and these are angry, disaffected and impoverished youths. That the Western coalition occupying Iraq does not understand the significance of this fact and its potential danger for them is extraordinarily dismissive and reckless, and nothing would have greater effect in reducing this anger than the liberation of Palestine. It is this essential truth that the anti-war movement has now laid bare.

Ghada Karmi

supporters (including some self-styled liberals and socialists). Clearly, its anti-war mobilising work among a section of the community which had hitherto been overwhelmingly loyal to the Labour Party has caused more than a fluttering in certain dovescotes. It has been branded as a reactionary fundamentalist organisation, as a front for Egyptian terrorists, and as anti-Semitic. None of these charges are true.

MAB's actual objectives are clear and reasonable. Those commentators who have regularly traduced MAB in their columns make no reference to these, although they are easily obtainable, perhaps because it would expose the characterisation of MAB as "reactionary fundamentalists" as the racist lie that it is. The objectives include:

- ☞ To spread the teachings and culture of Islam, instil Islamic principles in the hearts of the Muslim community and enhance good morals within British society...
- ☞ Make Muslims aware of their duties towards the society within which they are living and towards their duty of being witness on mankind.
- ☞ To promote an active role for the Muslim community in helping solve the different problems of this society (like crime, drugs, unemployment, family disintegration).
- ☞ To assist in the endeavours being exerted towards protecting human rights in general and Muslims in particular.
- ☞ To establish a relationship of cooperation and coordination with other institutions and organisations in any activity which does not contradict these aims and objectives.
- ☞ To broaden the scope of dialogue between the different cultures and faiths in order to serve society and humanity.
- ☞ To improve the relationship between the Muslim community and the British institutions on the one hand, and the Muslim world on the other, so that their social, economic and political relationship be revived on a sound basis.
- ☞ To support just causes and take advantage for this of technology, constructive education and the good morals of society.³⁰

No one could reasonably see in this a programme for a theocracy, let alone a call to terrorism. Many organisations in British life which worship at different altars have similar objectives.

MAB and its leaders should also be acquitted of the charge of anti-Semitism. MAB representatives never raised the slightest objection to Jewish speakers on our common platforms, or to the extensive and important Jewish participation in the movement more generally. Obviously, such objections would have been unacceptable to the Stop the War Coalition — but the issue never arose. It is true, however — and this is an issue for everyone to dwell upon — that MAB leaders, like almost everyone in the Middle East, by and large regard Palestine as existing not merely in the West Bank and Gaza, but throughout its historic territory. This obviously includes the state of Israel — a state which, upon its foundation, drove hundreds of thousands of Arabs, including some prominent today in MAB, from their homes.

It is not in and of itself anti-Semitic to view the state of Israel as an historical aberration which has brought vast suffering on the Arab peoples of the Middle East and, in a different fashion, proved a dead end for Jewish people worldwide, too.

That, indeed, is the view of some Jewish religious sects (representatives of one of these spoke at our September 2002 demonstration at MAB's invitation) and many secular Jews. The demand for a single secular democratic state in which both Jew and Arab could live side by side throughout Palestine was for long a demand which united many progressive people around the world. If today, by force of circumstance, the leadership of the Palestinian people have come to accept a two-state solution, it does not make all those who hold to the previous position anti-Semitic.

If such a policy is allied to calls for the expulsion of Israelis, or the killing of Jews, then a clear line has been crossed into anti-Semitism. There were occasional complaints about such slogans being heard on anti-war demonstrations — but only from fringe groups and isolated individuals. In so far as it was in our power to do so, the organisers of the movement confronted such behaviour and sought to exclude its practitioners from the marches. There can be no scope for complacency at any revival of this evil, or any concession to anti-Semitic conspiracy theories which, even if mouthed occasionally by young Muslims, are rooted in European Christian reaction.

The Coalition also emphasised — and on this we agreed with the Board of Deputies at our meeting — that any backlash against Jewish people on account of the tensions caused in Britain by the war was just as unacceptable as a backlash against Muslims. It is evident that no British Jew bears any responsibility for the policy of the Israeli government and, even if they choose to support it, they should no more be criticised for this fact than any pro-Israeli Gentile should be. In this sense, the Board of Deputies — with its insistent identification of British Jews with the state of Israel — and conservative critics of Israel who demand that British Jews disassociate themselves from Israeli policy in order to avoid stimulating anti-Semitism, are mirror images of each other. Both decline to allow the possibility of British Jews having no more or less to do with Israel, let alone any particular government in Tel Aviv, than anybody else.

The Stop the War Coalition did all it could to address the legitimate concerns of the Board of Deputies. A poster reproducing a quotation from UN weapons inspector Scott Ritter, referring to the greater value put on the lives of "British or Jewish children" than those of Iraqis, was withdrawn at its request. Efforts were made to remove an inappropriate session on "Zionist uses of the Holocaust" from the programme of a Coalition conference in Edinburgh. But we could ultimately not concede the central demand that we cease all mention of the Palestinian issue on our demonstrations and de-link the different sides of the struggle for peace in the Middle East. Because of this, we endured increasingly temperamental correspondence from the board's director-general, Neville Nagler, which did not indicate any desire to establish common ground.

It is true that the Chief Rabbi was the only head of a major religion in Britain who ultimately supported the war. Why he found moral a war that the leaders of Protestant, Catholic and Methodist Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism all opposed is a matter best left to theology. In any event, the Stop the War Coalition was, and remains, entirely hostile to anti-Semitism. We do not share the view, wrongly espoused by Tam Dalyell MP, that Tony Blair's policy towards the Middle East bears the imprint of a "Jewish cabal" around him. The Coalition does not, either, take a position between those who advocate a two-state or one-state solution (in which Arabs and Jews would coexist in the same non-racial and non-sectarian democracy). We stand for justice for the Palestinians, and would support anything the Palestinians themselves recognise as such.

Among the other charges laid against MAB, under the general heading of "fundamentalism", are those that it holds reactionary views on women's place in society and on social questions generally. These charges depend on prejudiced assumption. But let us not dismiss them out of hand.

In relation to the women's question, it is a fact that the leadership of MAB is entirely composed of men (other than the leadership of its women's section), mainly of Middle Eastern origin. This is certainly a shortcoming in any organisation, and not one the Stop the War Coalition suffered from. Yet there was never any suggestion by MAB that the participation of women in the movement should be restricted. On the contrary, its own attitude seemed to take new shape as the movement progressed. In the first demonstration organised jointly by the two organisations, all the platform speakers nominated by MAB were male. By the time of the later demonstrations, half its nominated speakers were women, most of them young. MAB was warmly supportive of the activities of Salma Yaqoob, the outstanding young Muslim woman who played a leading part in the Birmingham anti-war movement, and other women activists within the Muslim community. At no point was any misogynist view expressed, nor was there any reticence about the involvement and mobilisation of women.

There is another aspect to these misguided criticisms of MAB that does not reflect well on those who make them. The critics generally do not hold their own organisations — of what might be called the indigenous progressive movement — to the same standards. Anyone remotely acquainted with the British trade union movement, for example, will be aware that neither sexism nor homophobia are uncommon in its ranks. The organisations generally have the appropriate policies, yet women can be subjected to more crude sexist behaviour than they might be likely to encounter within the Muslim Association of Britain. No one would suggest that an anti-war movement should have no truck with trade unionism until its ranks are 100 percent cleansed of such behaviour. Yet this is good

enough as a stick to beat Muslims. Such attitudes indicate a form of racism, a desire to hold *their* organisations at arms length for flaws which are, in some measure, tolerable in *ours*.

Finally, the charge has been made that the anti-war movement pandered to "Muslim extremism" in general. This is not the case. The Coalition was careful to

avoid taking a position on the Kashmir question, another issue dear to many Muslims worldwide. When war seemed on the verge of erupting between India and Pakistan, the Coalition confined itself to urging a peaceful settlement. Likewise, we did not become engaged with the Chechen question, although the brutality of the Russian army there makes it a more straightforward matter than the conflict on the subcontinent. We kept our focus exclusively on the Anglo-American "war on terror" and its targets. That seemed to be the responsibility of our movement, rather than addressing every international conflict — many of which have roots which cannot be reduced to the policy of the Bush and Blair administrations, or even the US in general.

At any event, a proposal that the Stop the War Coalition sever all links with MAB was made at its conference in January 2003 by a cadre from the marginal Alliance for Workers Liberty. Among several hundred delegates it secured just one vote. Of course, the later attacks on MAB by Zionist MPs like Louise Ellman and liberal newspapers like the *Observer* were much more serious. But by then it was clear that MAB's real offence was to have successfully helped mobilise millions of Muslims against imperialism.

28 SEPTEMBER 2002

The summer of 2002 was spent organising, mobilising, giving out leaflets, booking coaches, and arguing with and convincing people. Meetings were at record sizes. In Bradford one Saturday afternoon 300 people packed into a community centre to hear George Galloway, by now the star attraction of most of our public meetings with his combination of oratorical power and genuine empathy with the Muslim peoples of Britain. George also mobilised his campaign bus to travel round towns where he was speaking to put the anti-war message.

All the meetings and activities reflected how diverse the movement had become, attracting large numbers of Muslim Asians but also Afro-Caribbeans, Indians, Africans, Latin Americans, young and old, gay and straight, very large numbers of women (who from the beginning have been the backbone of the Stop the War Coalition locally and nationally), school students, pensioners, peace activists and trade unionists. Everyone could feel something big and important was happening. Rallies in every major town played a big part in building both the demonstration and the political unity of the movement.

The Trades Union Congress, representing all the major trade unions in Britain, met as usual in the middle of September. Although the resolution it eventually passed accepted war, if it was endorsed by the UN and if further weapons inspections did not work, a much tougher minority resolution proposed by RMT rail union leader Bob Crow won about 40 percent of the vote — a remarkable position for a stand which had relatively little official backing in the labour movement. A successful fringe meeting rehearsed the arguments against war. This strong anti-war stance inside the official trade union movement reflected the work done over previous months, and sent a signal to Tony Blair and the Labour Party apparatus that the argument was going to be carried to the heart of the governing party itself.

In between the TUC and Labour's own conference, however, one of those strange accidents of history occurred which inadvertently helped the anti-war mobilisation. The week before our demonstration, when preparations, street leafleting and meetings were at their height, another protest took place from a very different quarter.

STOP THE WAR COALITION

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The front of the national demonstration to oppose the threat of war on Iraq, 28 September 2002. The banner is held by Louise Christian, Jeremy Corbyn, Lindsey German, Mohammed Sarwar, Yvonne Ridley and Dr Siddique

POCKET FLUFF AND PENNIES

28 September 2002 was the first demo where there were separate stalls at both ends of the demonstration. Previously a few people went via the tube to the end of the march with T-shirts, buckets and paste tables. Craig Liddle (Housmans bookshop) and I never left Charing Cross.

We could not go to Hyde Park on the tube with buckets of coins and boxes of merchandise, so we waited and were eventually picked up at 7pm. My house was full of buckets of coins, which did not smell too good. I had to persuade lots of people (Lucy Ellinson, Husniye Akpinar, Nathan Servini, Sheila Malone, Stephanie Sebbage) to help me count it with an offer of food and alcohol. It took days... The bank were not too pleased at the volume of coinage that I took in, in a taxi in buckets with the help of my neighbour Patrick Reader.

Initially the police would not allow anyone to set up stalls in Hyde Park on 15 February, so I was behind a line of police horses with lots of boxes, but when they were distracted by the amount of people pouring into the park we all sneaked in and set up our stalls. Lots of people just took buckets and went into the crowd to collect money. At this point we just had to trust that individuals would not run off with buckets of money. Again there were buckets and buckets of coins and in the end £25,000 in notes which all had to be counted and banked.

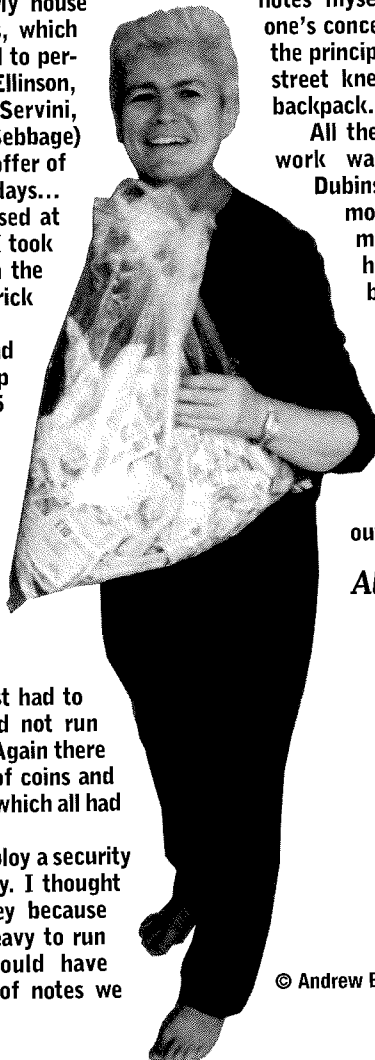
CND had wanted to employ a security guard to protect the money. I thought that was a waste of money because buckets of coins are too heavy to run off with, and nobody would have known about the amount of notes we

had. The nearest the van could park was Fulham, so a group of us were in Hyde Park until about 9pm with lots of money, and it was very cold. The police were quite concerned about our safety because of the amount we had. Not that we could move anywhere – we just had to wait.

For subsequent demos I arranged for the bank to collect all the money from the office and count it. I did bank the notes myself, much to everyone's concern, but I worked on the principle that no one in the street knew what was in my backpack.

All the heavy organisation work was done by Laura Dubinsky and Mike Podmore. They fronted the meetings that were held for fundraisers before the demonstrations. A lot of individuals worked very hard to raise the money to fund the demonstrations. Nothing would have been possible without them.

Alice Kilroy



© Andrew Burgin

The Countryside Alliance organised a mass protest in support of fox hunting, and in defence of the country way of living as they understood it. It was clearly going to be a large protest, with two separate meeting points in London. It attracted record amounts of pre-publicity for a demonstration, reflecting the large amounts of money its organisers possessed and also the sympathy for its aims from the rich, including many newspaper owners and editors. Details of the march's assembly points and routes, phone numbers for transport and sympathetic interviews with prospective marchers filled the papers day after day.

On the day, the marches were indeed large – and, uniquely in British history, police and organisers agreed exactly on the figure of just over 400,000 demonstrators. Many marchers were given the day off by their employers, and much transport and even hotel accommodation was free.

The Stop the War Coalition had no such advantages. Our office operated from a small room in the old Truman brewery in east London's Brick Lane. We had no big financial backers, next to no publicity resources and few friends in the mainstream media. But such was the publicity given to the Countryside Alliance that it was possible for us to argue with journalists to give us some prominence, including showing maps of the route and giving details of transport arrangements. In addition, the anti-war mood was now growing too large for the media to ignore. Sections of the press did indeed sympathise with us, and there was a feeling here and there that if the Countryside Alliance, loosely speaking for conservative Britain, could mobilise 400,000 people, progressive Britain could not allow itself to do worse. Of course, there was also a slice of the population who, while being OK with killing foxes, did not go along with the government's plans to attack Iraq – the opposite to the view held by too many on Labour's backbenches.

The heightened atmosphere around the dossier, published only a few days before the march, also helped to turn people out. It was just a year since the *Guardian* had tried to justify its non-reporting of the first big march against the Afghan war by saying, "We don't report demos." It did now. Several days before the march, we realised it was going to be very big indeed. Campaigners everywhere outside London were putting on extra coaches and other transport.

28 September was a beautiful autumn day with blue skies and sunshine as we assembled at the Embankment to march to Hyde Park. Our previous experience of marches did not prepare us for the size or the exuberance. Stewarding was difficult, especially at the front where the crush from people behind made the experience physically uncomfortable. The RMT general secretary Bob Crow, a significant physical presence, stepped in to help control the front banner. Somehow we got to Hyde Park with no incidents or trouble and had a huge platform of speakers, not all of whom got to address the rally because we went on so long that the park police switched off the PA system. Among those who did speak was Scott Ritter, the former UN weapons inspector who believed the war was wrong. A conservative Republican, he had been extremely uncomfortable to be marching with so many "radicals" earlier in the day, but was a jubilant convert to the anti-war movement's potential by the end.

The turnout was around 400,000 (the police put it at 150,000, but by then we were used to the "count one, skip one" method of counting our demonstrations). It represented a cross-section of Britain: trade unionists, including a number of trade union leaders; ethnic minorities and people from every continent, especially south

WE WERE HARD TO IGNORE

28 September 2002 forced a sea change in media attitude towards the Stop the War Coalition and those who were protesting against the war.

This was the day that 400,000 people took to the streets of London to show their opposition to the looming war with Iraq. Such numbers meant that it was finally hard to continue ignoring the unprecedented grassroots groundswell against the Blairite support for an invasion of Iraq.

One senior BBC correspondent, who had popped down to Hyde Park gates to make a "quick package" as marchers filed through into the park, told me that the size of the demonstration had so taken BBC news editors by surprise they were compelled to run "the story" as the top news item, and actually expanded the Saturday evening news coverage – stealing time allocated to sports news – to give the story a decent airing.

Following the September demonstration the *Daily Mirror* commissioned an in-house survey which revealed that 40 percent of the country were against any war with Iraq, but that rose to 60 percent amongst *Mirror* readers. Editor Piers Morgan told his staff that the paper was to become a campaigning anti-war paper.

And although the *Mirror's* official editorial policy was to support a war under the auspices of United Nations, they rehired John Pilger in October 2002, giving him complete editorial control, and his campaigning columns were in turn a huge boost to the movement.

Carmel Brown



Asians and Arabs from the Muslim community; students and school students; pensioners; people who cheerfully described themselves as from "Middle England"; Labour activists and those who had never voted Labour. The march was peaceful and well stewarded, with people cooperating even though they were stuck for hours at Embankment waiting to move, and it received the desired publicity on the eve of Labour's conference.

The *Sunday Mirror* reported, "350,000 Say No To War – London Protest Blasts PM's Saddam Plan" and quoted journalist John Pilger, one of the speakers at the rally, as saying, "This is not a fringe demonstration – this is the political mainstream of Britain... Bush and Blair are behaving exactly like Hitler did in the 1930s".³¹ The *Observer* reported the same figure – and a Channel 4 poll put 75 percent against war unless a second UN resolution was forthcoming.³²

After the march we received phone calls from several union general secretaries on their way to the conference in Blackpool congratulating us on organising it. They were part of the number of trade unionists, MPs and Labour activists on the march who now made their way to Blackpool. They felt heartened by the support for the anti-war movement, and there was a strong anti-war sentiment throughout the Labour conference. As Tony Blair was being interviewed on TV by David Frost in the lounge of a Blackpool hotel on the Sunday morning, viewers could see George Galloway's campaign bus driving up and down the promenade, and hear it blasting "Give Peace a Chance" from loudspeakers – testimony to George's campaigning élan.

The march gave a huge boost to our movement and to the sentiment around it. It also established the Stop the War Coalition as a major campaigning force in Britain. It was a mass movement like few others, and had many of the characteristics of the anti-capitalist and anti-globalisation movements which sprang up throughout the world after the Seattle demonstrations against the WTO in 1999. These had never assumed mass proportions in Britain, but now the anti-war movement filled

that space and more. This meant a large number of our supporters developed a critique not just of war, but of globalisation, neo-liberalism and imperialism. This, in turn, heightened their awareness of what lay behind Bush and Blair's drive to war. We also received international support and recognition – most movingly from US peace activist Ron Kovic, a disabled Vietnam war veteran and author of the book *Born on the Fourth of July*, who emailed his congratulations and said, "You have inspired the world."

Support and affiliations began to flood in and we rapidly established two more national focuses for activity in the months ahead – a day of direct action throughout Britain on Halloween, 31 October (direct action against the war being an idea first floated by Tony Benn in his speech at our March demonstration), and another national demonstration, pencilled in for 15 February the following year, unless events moved faster.

BLAIR'S GAMBLE

Blair, meanwhile, was putting all his money on the UN route and the search for a second resolution from the Security Council to authorise war. He made a speech in his Sedgefield constituency in early September in which he stressed, "The UN has to be the way of dealing with this issue – and not the way of avoiding dealing with it".³³ He travelled to the US later that month to try to put the case for the UN to Bush. Blair's impotence was clear, however, since he had to stress that he would back Bush whatever the outcome at the UN – not a conclusion he wished to make public to Labour activists. John Kampfner records, "They came to a deal. Bush promised that if the UN did deliver genuine disarmament, he would pursue the diplomatic route. Blair promised that if that failed, he would go to war".³⁴

It is a reasonable assumption, therefore, that at precisely the time when Blair, Straw and their allies in the cabinet were beating the drum for war, they were playing a double game. They knew that war would only be acceptable to many in Britain, and especially inside the labour movement, if it was carried out with the authority of the United Nations. This lay behind the heightened diplomatic activity which had the British at its centre. At the same time, the UN route was a charade in the sense that it was a fig leaf for Bush. The main players, including Blair, had already agreed on a plan for war, whatever happened at the United Nations. At least some anti-war activists were aware of this, but others wanted to give the government the benefit of the doubt and allow it to go down this path. Many believed the UN could avert war and it was well worth trying. In addition, the attempt gave a number of people a sense of security – so many Labour MPs had sworn to their constituents that they would never vote for a unilateral attack on Iraq without full UN authorisation that it seemed hard to believe a Labour government could go into such a war.



Bob Crow, RMT general secretary, on the 28 September 2002 demo
© Jess Hurd/reportdigital.co.uk

WHALLEY RANGE FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE

In January 2003 a group of residents in Whalley Range, an inner city suburb of Manchester which you may be familiar with through the early work of Morrissey, decided there were enough of us intending to go to the demonstration in London the following month to make it worth hiring our own coach.

In the end we took three coaches down and met a lot more residents in the process. We decided to begin our own weekly anti-war vigils at Brooks Bar traffic lights, outside the Whalley Hotel.

And we're still there every Friday night from 5 to 6.30pm. The vigil will have been continuous for over two years by the time you read this, including Christmas and new year, with an average attendance of 15 out of an active membership of around 40.

We are a very mixed bunch. We have members of several political parties, but the great majority are non-aligned. People work for local authorities, the health service, schools, colleges, trade unions, in IT, the arts, as carers, as homemakers and in one case as a bouncer (sorry, doorman). Other members are students, retired, unemployed or in poor health.

Our supporters, who "Hoot for Peace and Justice", seem to be similarly motley. We have always relied on enthusiastic support from Asian taxi drivers, firefighters and radical cyclists. But people realise the extent to which they were misled by the government, and we are just as likely now to be honked at by people driving trucks or BMWs. We also organise meetings, film shows and benefit gigs on a range of issues around global justice.

Whalley Range for Peace and Justice

can be contacted at
rangeagainstawar@hotmail.com

PROTESTING VERY LOUDLY FROM NEW FOREST

It was some time before the 15 February demo in London when Joyce and I (two elderly lesbians in our sixties) were listening to the daily news, and came to the realisation that Bush actually was going to attack and occupy Iraq. We had no alternative but to protest, and protest very loudly. We also realised that the two of us were pretty helpless on our own, and we would need others.

So we printed out a petition and stood outside Safeways in the small town of New Milton in Hampshire. We got a lot of signatures but not a lot of people wanting to do anything. Then we met Anne – she was angry enough to help – then Shirley, then Lorna, Liz and Les. We were on our way to serious organising! We called ourselves the New Forest Peace Group and got out onto the streets. We filled two coaches to go to London. We came back from London inspired. We organised a 50-strong march through the local market town of Lymington to the police station, and demanded the arrest of Blair for war crimes. We were refused a march through Lyndhurst, capital of the New Forest, so we had a "window shop". Dozens of us strolled along the high street holding banners, filling the pavements and browsing the windows – very effective!

Ann Fannin



BANNERS ARE MADE WHEN ANGER SPILLS TO THE STREET

I have made 50 banners for Stop the War Coalition groups, and many others to identify trade unions on the eight national demonstrations of the Coalition.

The mornings spent hauling up banners in Trafalgar Square and then engaging with the comments of tourists have been the best spent hours of my life.

There is a thrill of making banners to send such an important message. Because trade unions and campaigns of the left are the bedrock of our society there is privilege also. I had a unique opportunity to meet people from all over the country and see their banners fly.

Trafalgar Square has given me magical late afternoons. The Thursday of "Stop Bush" when young people danced round the campfires of placard sticks, the toppling of the George Bush statue in front of thousands, and the singing of Peter Doherty – for me a generation away, but there is something in his folksong roots which towers above the rhetoric of the Blair government. Doherty sings, "Pick up a guitar and spin a web of sound." George Galloway, the best speaker of his generation, names the 45-minute claim as the "fattest lie in history", and wonderfully says that when parliament voted for war "a shiver ran through the Commons looking for a backbone to run up."

The winner of the Turner Prize, Jeremy Deller, has emphasised the mobilising importance of the war. His work is based on the experiences of ordinary people and the commonplace over the "message" of the state. He and other artists who lead the world in their field, musicians and comedians, have creatively and completely destroyed the myth of the "Cool Britannia" of New Labour.

Wonderful people have taken to the streets with banners in protest against the wilful and mechanised attack on the people of Iraq, who have suffered for 30 years and still have to resist oppression, torture, invasion and injustice. Instead of American Bibles being sent to Iraq, I am sure copies of this book will be read there with the message, "We are your friends and allies."

Ed Hall

In fact, Blair was treating the UN with contempt, saying the international body only had a role if it endorsed pre-cooked decisions presented by Washington and London. The "UN route" did not involve a search for international legality, but a search for cover for international crime. The process reached its nadir early in 2003, when the increasingly fatuous Jack Straw began declaring that war could proceed in spite of an "unreasonable veto" cast by one power or another at the Security Council. Given that he was fond of waving the UN Charter around in public at this stage, Straw might have noticed that the concept of "unreasonable veto" is not to be found in it.

Bush's deception was now at its height. On 7 September he declared that a report from the International Atomic Energy Authority (IAEA) said Iraq could obtain nuclear weapons within six months. There was no such report. On 12 September Bush addressed the UN and talked of Saddam's "continued appetite" for nuclear weapons — again with no evidence. A month later he claimed that Iraq had unmanned aircraft which could be fitted with chemical or biological weapons and used "for missions targeting the United States". In fact none could reach the US.³⁵

This was the background to the intense diplomacy in the run up to resolution 1441, passed unanimously by the UN Security Council in New York on 8 November 2002 and interpreted by the Blair government as justifying war without a further resolution. In fact, the resolution called for the immediate return of the Unmovic weapons inspectors and the IAEA nuclear weapons inspectorate into Iraq to search for the remaining WMD, which Bush and Blair claimed presented such a continuing threat. Iraq would "face serious consequences" if it refused full and open access and cooperation with the inspectors.³⁶

The argument in the autumn and winter of 2002-03 was at its height. There were two parallel debates taking place. Inside parliament, the media and government circles, argument focused on whether war should take place only if a UN resolution was gained, or whether it should take place regardless. And if weapons inspectors went in, how long should they be allowed to search for the weapons before war was declared?

However, this was no longer the main issue under debate in the anti-war movement and among the public generally. While the establishment debates found their echo throughout society, there was by now a strong strand of opinion which said no to war with Iraq, with or without the UN. Rapidly this became the overwhelming majority view in the anti-war movement itself. Essentially, the government's increasingly convoluted arguments, and the sense that it was working to a hidden agenda dictated by prior commitments given to Bush, meant it was irrevocably losing more of the public with every passing week.

ESCALATING MOBILISATION

Two protests took place in those months which had a big impact on strengthening this wing of the movement. The first was on 31 October, Halloween, when the Stop the War Coalition staged the biggest series of direct action protests against war so far seen in Britain. All round the country protesters, some dressed in Halloween masks and witches' hats, sat down in roads, demonstrated, occupied colleges and walked out of schools. Traffic was disrupted in many towns and villages across Britain. In London the atmosphere was electric, with student occupiers marching from the LSE to Parliament Square, King's College holding an "open mic" session in the bar to discuss the war, and

school students from across the capital turning up opposite Big Ben to chant, "That's not what democracy looks like! This is what democracy looks like!" Stop the War Coalition fundraisers Laura Dubinsky and Alice Kilroy appeared in the national press in their witches' costumes.

Action elsewhere in the country included 200 people halting traffic in Southampton, a sit-down at a Territorial Army base in Bristol, leafleting an RAF base in Stafford, a march to the BBC studios in Birmingham, roads blocked in Portsmouth, Sheffield and Leeds, large marches in Edinburgh, Bournemouth, Cambridge, Bedford (the second largest in the town's history) and elsewhere, and student occupations at the London School of Economics, in Manchester and in Liverpool. Nottingham students blockaded an army recruitment centre.

Although the police made a number of arrests in London and elsewhere, most people were released without charge, and those who were charged later had all proceedings dropped. The government and police were nervous about raising the level of confrontation with protesters when the war was so unpopular and the movement had gained such momentum following the September demonstration. In practice, we had asserted the right to protest in Parliament Square and Whitehall, despite official opposition. The Halloween direct action amounted to a successful series of protests in their own right, but it also meant that if war became imminent we would be able to go right to the heart of government for protest after protest — something which had been denied to protesters previously, and which still is denied to the anti-war movement in the US.

A second event which shaped the future of the movement was the European Social Forum (ESF) in Florence, Italy, in November 2002. Based on the highly successful World Social Forums which had taken place in Porto Alegre, Brazil, the ESF brought together activists from movements and campaigns across Europe. The Stop the War Coalition was represented in planning the event and at its meetings, and there was a substantial contingent from Britain at the ESF and on the demonstration which wound its way through Florence on the final day. Numbered at up to 1 million, one of the main themes was opposition to the impending war.

Just before the demonstration there was a planning meeting in a small room in the complex which had housed the ESF. No more than 30 people attended, but they were representative of the anti-war movements in a number of European countries. The debate centred on a date for internationally coordinated anti-war action in the new year. The Stop the War Coalition had already fixed on 15 February as our protest day. Some in the US had gone for 18 January. The debate went to and fro. Was 15 February too late — would the war have started by then? Eventually we agreed — the European-wide demos would be centred on 15 February.

We did not dream then that this call would spread not just through Europe but across the world to every continent, and that the date would mark the biggest ever demonstrations in many countries — and the biggest worldwide protest of all time.

From then on the mobilisation simply did not stop. Weapons inspectors went back into Iraq under the terms of resolution 1441, but it was obvious the US did not want a deal or a climbdown by Saddam Hussein. So the protests, the meetings and the lobbies of MPs all continued, as did the preparation for 15 February. On Christmas



HOW I GOT MY KNICKERS IN THE EVENING STANDARD

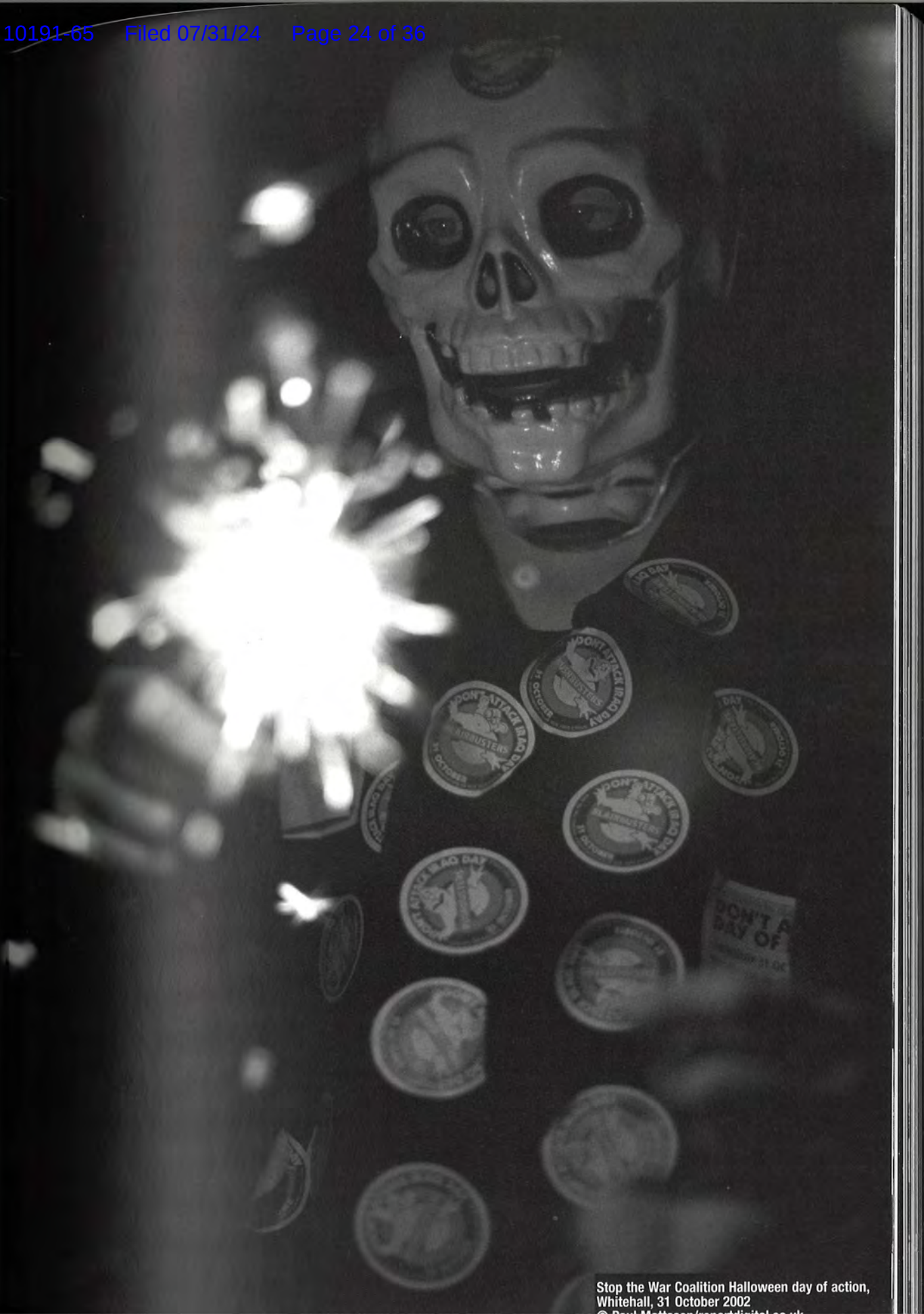
The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq led to massive opposition in the colleges. The first national demonstration after 9/11 had 400 students from SOAS on it. This college was previously most famous for training Britain's spies. Now it became the vanguard of the student anti-war movement. Meetings of hundreds of students followed at most campuses – 1,100 students packed York University's biggest lecture theatre to hear Tony Benn.

Individuals from colleges without anti-war groups would turn up on a demo or at a meeting at another college, and become the focus of organising meetings in their college. It could take just one person in a college to articulate what everyone felt about the war. In October 2002 an art student called Katy from a tiny art college in Wimbledon came to an organising meeting of the Student Stop the War Coalition. Within weeks she'd organised a meeting of 60 students at her 500-student college, led a walkout and brought students to protests in London.

When term started in October 2002, 250 students representing universities across London came together to set up the Student Stop the War Coalition. Meetings and rallies were held at all the

major universities in Britain to prepare for occupations, walkouts and demos on 31 October, the date the Stop the War Coalition had named as the day of civil disobedience against the war on Iraq. In all, 12 universities occupied against impending war. In London the occupation of the London School of Economics (LSE) was the focus of activity on the day. There was a protest outside SOAS, a "legalised" occupation at Goldsmiths' – where the anti-war vice-chancellor had agreed to turn over college space for a teach-in and banner-making day – and rallies in other colleges. Up to 2,000 students from across London converged at LSE in the early evening, and we marched to join the protest in Parliament Square. The whole demonstration then marched back up to Whitehall where we were stopped by police on the far side of the road from Downing Street. We pushed to try to get through to Downing Street, and I was arrested. In the course of trying to stop the police grabbing me, my "comrades" pulled the buttons and zip off my trousers. My picture was taken as I was arrested, and that's how I got my knickers in the *Evening Standard*.

Helen Salmon



Eve 2002 the officers of the Stop the War Coalition were all in Downing Street, along with Iraqi children living in London, to protest yet again at the lives put in danger by the war. Our Christmas drink was a brief and sober occasion in a Whitehall pub before we all rushed off for last-minute shopping.

LIES AND THREATS

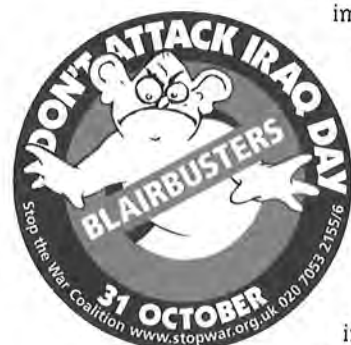
Tony Blair agonised that Christmas — not over to whether to go to war, but how to save himself politically when he did. So his new year message stressed the dangers facing Britain. As if to underline the threat of terrorism, a police raid allegedly discovered traces of ricin at a north London flat occupied by north Africans.³⁷ This was only one of a series of high profile "terrorist alerts" in the next few months, most notoriously the placing of tanks around Heathrow airport in the days before 15 February because of a "terrorist threat" which mysteriously evaporated a few days after the march.

The supposed terrorist threat was only one way in which the propaganda war was stepped up. Increasingly vitriolic attacks on some of the European powers opposed to war, especially France and Germany, heightened the tension. An open letter cobbled together by Blair and the Spanish premier Jose Maria Aznar, signed by premiers from a number of the smaller European countries and represented as standing for the "new Europe", further deepened the rift. Chief weapons inspector Hans Blix reported to the UN in January and was critical of Saddam Hussein. The US wanted to turn his report into a trigger for war. That it failed was a signal of how disunited world leaders had become, and how much pressure they were coming under from their own peoples to avoid war. On 20 January defence minister Geoff Hoon announced in parliament that troops were being sent to the region — and on that same day an opinion poll showed less support for military action in Iraq than at any previous time.³⁸

In the first week of February the British government issued another dossier, supposedly exposing Iraq's weapons and links with Al Qaida. Now immortalised as the dodgiest "dodgy dossier", this was almost instantly exposed as a steal from a PhD thesis carried out by a student in the US. Worse, Alastair Campbell and his team — for they were the brains behind this one — had altered the language of the plagiarised document to strengthen the case for war. New Labour's fabled presentational mastery had degenerated into farce.

All this was exposed by Dr Glen Rangwala once more. None of it stopped Colin Powell praising the dossier in his presentation to the UN Security Council days later, when he spelled out the supposed links between Al Qaida and Saddam.

The five or six weeks before the war began in February and March 2003 passed in an atmosphere of constant tension and crisis. Blair's television performances and public appearances turned into routine denunciations of him by angry members of the public. How big the vote against Blair would be when he finally put his war policy to parliament was a constant topic of speculation.



Crucial to the support of many Labour backbenchers were concessions, especially over a second UN resolution. Many Labour MPs had pledged in newspapers, in parliament and to their constituents that they would vote against any war with Iraq unless there was a second resolution. Now they were faced with the prospect of there being no second resolution. Blair had staked his political success on such a resolution. It became clear from early 2003 that it would be hard to win — and that Bush didn't give a damn about it anyway. The Washington summit between the two leaders at the end of January was a bad-tempered affair which reflected the lack of a common political strategy.

Bush determined that a second resolution should take the form of an ultimatum, but he could not get the votes of the bulk of the Security Council. Faced with this impasse, he pressed ahead. Seeing that Blair's government could fall over the war, Bush offered Blair the chance of pulling out, of sending troops only in a later "peacekeeping" phase — a compromise Donald Rumsfeld let slip in public, to Blair's huge embarrassment. Blair refused to even countenance such a move, telling the president, "I'm there to the very end".³⁹

The end was very near. But the British people would be heard from first.



Camberwell Art College students perform a die in against the war, 31 October 2002.

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STOP THE INSANITY OF WAR

0136 01

reject U.S
imperialism!

reject U.S
imperialism!

VICES
D.

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LONDON

BILLBOARDS FOR PEACE

In November 2001 I went to my first Monday night meeting at the civic hall in Leeds. A year later I had been on three national demonstrations and I was working on a billboard campaign, a joint venture between Birmingham and Leeds Stop the War. I had to raise £6,000 for 30 billboard sites. Easy enough? It wasn't that hard actually.

I took a day out of university with my car and a list of names and addresses of people who had pledged money. I picked up £4,000 in a day. Many people handed me envelopes full of cash. It was crazy.

When the billboards went up much of the Coalition was astounded that it had actually happened. Anti-war billboards? What next? A million people on the street?

I am constantly inspired and frustrated by the reaction of "the

Muslim community". It's meant to be my community. I am supposed to know what "the Muslims" are doing. But how can I when there are multiple reactions, even within my home?

I was moved though, really inspired, when Leeds Stop the War Coalition organised a meeting with representatives from local mosques. It might not sound earth shattering, but on one evening we managed to bring together people from seven different mosques in Leeds – Shia and Sunni, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Indian and Arab in the same room.

I have grown up in a climate of disagreement and apathy in the mosque. My peers (and organisations like MPAC) will bear testament to the frustration of many in my generation with the depoliticised mentalities so

unavoidably associated with many of our religious leaders.

To get my parents' generation engaging, talking and organising was a very personal breakthrough for me. We cannot for a second underestimate what the anti-war movement has meant within the Muslim community.

I still get frustrated, and there is a mountain of work to do, but things are moving. Alliances have been made, people are talking, and more importantly agreeing that there is no place for racism, war and lies in our society. For heaven's sake – my parents, who came to England in the 1960s, went leafleting for the first time in 2003 to stop the war. That's what you call moving a mountain.

Mobeen Azhar
Leeds

GOING GLOBAL

15 February must have been the biggest protest in history. A French academic estimated that 35 million people marched on the day, but it may have been many more. The day's protests started in New Zealand and swept round the globe, taking in more than 1,000 cities and towns. Australia had its biggest demonstrations in living memory. 200,000 took to the streets of Calcutta. A similar number came out in Damascus. In Mostar in Bosnia, Muslims and Croats united for an anti-war protest. Greeks and Turks came together in Cyprus to surround a British base.

The biggest single demo was probably Rome's 3 million strong march, but at least that number marched across Spain, and later well over 1 million demonstrated in the US. Reykjavik hosted the biggest march anyone could remember. Scientists protested on Ross Island, Antarctica, and there were 15

demos in Brazil, including one in Florianopolis where a seafront march ended with a 1,000-strong rally on the beach.

Days after the demo the *New York Times* dubbed world public opinion "the second global superpower". The great gatherings of the global justice movement laid the basis for this new kind of international protest. In July 2001, 300,000 people from across Europe marched against the G8 in Genoa, Italy. Earlier in the year the World Social Forum in Brazil had pioneered the idea of the mass international counter-conference, and in January 2002 the decision was made to organise a European Social Forum in Florence, Italy.

This turned out to be an extraordinary event – 50,000 came for the conferences and meetings alone. The demonstration that closed the forum

attracted nearly 1 million people. Peace flags flew from thousands of windows, and trains were rescheduled to serve the huge crowds. Although the demo had many slogans, it was noticeable anti-war chants dominated. The next morning thousands of activists crammed into the final assembly singing and chanting. In this electric atmosphere we launched the call for 15 February as a Europe-wide day of action against war.

Not everyone thought the impending war should be central to the movement's agenda. At the final preparation meeting for Florence in October 2002 a number of activists from France strongly opposed the idea, arguing the proposal was too controversial and that it might alienate the unions in France. Luckily leading Italian activists and others joined with us in insisting the movement went ahead with idea. We felt if the movement couldn't respond to the

threat of a global war on terror, we might as well pack up and go home.

Since then international anti-war coordination has strengthened. There is still a debate about the relative importance of the war in the movement, but most activists now take it for granted that war and globalisation are linked.

In 2003-04 popular pressure forced governments in Spain, Poland, the Philippines, Hungary, the Netherlands, the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua and Honduras to pull troops out of Iraq. When Bush visited Europe in 2003 and 2004 there were massive protests from Dublin in the west to Istanbul in the east. Now Bush and Blair face military defeat in Iraq, it is time to mobilise that global opposition once again.

Chris Nineham
Stop the War Coalition

STOP
GLOBAL
WAR
IMMEDIATE

notes

- (1) Micah L. Sifry and Christopher Cerf, *The Iraq War Reader* (New York: Touchstone, 2003), ch 5, especially p65.
- (2) *Ibid.*, p119.
- (3) John Kampfner, *Blair's Wars* (London: Free Press, 2004), p152.
- (4) *Ibid.*, p168.
- (5) Christopher Scheer, Robert Scheer and Lakshmi Chaudhry, *The Five Biggest Lies Bush Told Us About Iraq* (New York: Independent Media Institute, 2003), pp52-58, gives a full account of the story.
- (6) Sheldon Rampton and John Stauber, *Weapons of Mass Deception* (London: Robinson, 2003) pp91-96.
- (7) *Ibid.*, pp78-79.
- (8) *Ibid.*, p85.
- (9) *Ibid.*, p82-84.
- (10) Alex Callinicos, *The New Mandarins of American Power* (Cambridge: Polity, 2003) p20.
- (11) *Ibid.*, p21.
- (12) Sifry and Cerf, p269.
- (13) *Guardian*, 6 May 2002.
- (14) Kampfner, p159.
- (15) *Ibid.*, p165.
- (16) *Ibid.*, pp166-167.
- (17) *Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction* (London: HMSO, 2002), p17.
- (18) *Ibid.*, pp3-4.
- (19) *Ibid.*, p17.
- (20) *Ibid.*, p27.
- (21) *Ibid.*, p25.
- (22) Callinicos, p21.
- (23) *Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction*, p34.
- (24) *Ibid.*, p35.
- (25) *Ibid.*, p49.
- (26) *Labour Against the War Briefing*, p1.
- (27) *Ibid.*
- (28) *Ibid.*
- (29) *Ibid.*
- (30) mabonline.net/aboutmab/mission&vision
- (31) *Sunday Mirror*, 29 September 2002.
- (32) *Observer*, 29 September 2002.
- (33) Kampfner, p196.
- (34) *Ibid.*, p197.
- (35) Rampton and Stauber, pp86-87.
- (36) Sifry and Cerf, pp649-652.
- (37) Kampfner, p234.
- (38) *Ibid.*, p258.
- (39) Woodward, p338.



LISTEN TO YOUR PEOPLE

Listen to your people" — Paul Weller's message to Tony Blair at the "One Big No" concert, 15 March 2003. "Call out the instigator because there's something in the air. We've got to get together sooner or later because the revolution's here" — Thunderclap Newman. "Wilfred Owen wrote that war is futile and that was the First World War. I think we have enough intelligence to not have another one" — Tracey Emin, "One Big No" concert.

At the end of the rally on 22 March 2003 Stop the War Coalition supporter and BBC producer Ruth Boswell drove her car into Hyde Park and collected together a mass of banners and placards created for the demonstration by the people attending. Those three demonstrations — 15 February, 22 March and 12 April — had been accompanied by spontaneous and vivid art created and carried onto the streets. This "people's art" would be the foundation for an anti-war art exhibition held at the Aquarium Gallery the following year. The political campaign against the war has been marked at every stage by a huge creative energy. Artists, actors, poets, musicians, film-makers, authors and playwrights — all have contributed enormously to the flowering of the movement.

As soon as the bombing of Afghanistan began Katherine Hamnett produced a series of T-shirts to raise funds for those displaced by the war and for the campaign. The best and longest selling was her "Not in my name" design, of which we sold thousands.

The Coalition's first cultural event was at the Royal Court theatre in November 2001, with an excerpt from Caryl Churchill's *Far and Away* and with Kika Markham performing the monologue *Homebody/Kabul* by Tony Kushner. Kika and her husband Corin Redgrave have contributed to a number of events over the course of the campaign. Kika, Jemma Redgrave and Susanna Harker led a delegation of writers and actors to Downing Street to deliver an open letter against the war signed by over 100 prominent people (see appendix for complete list and letter). This took place as part of the lead-up to the 400,000-strong march in September 2002 and was an early indication that a profound change was taking place in British public life. That month we

held our first concert for peace at which Frankie Armstrong, Leon Rosselson and Robb Johnson performed.

This creative impulse found its reflection in the Halloween day of action, when many dressed up as witches and ghosts. Stickers were produced: "On Halloween cast a spell on Bush and Blair". There were pumpkins spelling out "Don't attack Iraq", each letter a pumpkin containing a candle, a striking image that the press loved. This playful aspect to the work of the Coalition softened what was a serious and large-scale direct action event — which blocked the centre of London and other cities. The demonstration on 12 April 2003 began with a remembrance for the dead, which Lucy Ellison arranged on Parliament Square. School students created a visually impressive "Hands up for peace" at many events.

In early February 2003 leading figures from the National Theatre, Ralph Fiennes, Corin and many others, joined by Trevor Nunn, Zoe Wanamaker and Joan Bakewell, protested outside the National with their own banner. 14 February 2003 was a particular focus for cultural events, as was the eve of the Bush demonstration. Ken Livingstone hosted a peace reception for Jesse Jackson at City Hall. Across London there was a host of other "happenings". Alex Cox showed his latest film, *Revengers Tragedy*, and Ken Loach and Stephen Frears introduced *11.09.01* and *Dirty Pretty Things*. Poets Against the War put on a reading at the Bloomsbury Theatre with Mike Rosen, Linton Kwesi Johnson, Sarah Maguire, Jean "Binta" Breeze, Tony Harrison and many others.

On 3 March 2003 the international theatre community performed over 700 readings of Aristophanes' anti-war play *Lysistrata*. Over 40 countries participated. In London the event took place in Parliament Square, with readings by Alan Rickman, Lindsay Duncan and Maggie Steed, among others. As war was beginning Janie Dee organised a concert for peace at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, with Judi Dench, Juliet Aubrey, opera singer Sally Burgess and Yvonne Ridley. Every Friday afternoon at the National through March 2003 Corin put together "Collateral Damage", free events to "illuminate, examine, satirise and grapple with the issues that surround the war in Iraq". Many of those who participated in this extraordinary series of events — such as Harold Pinter, Ken Loach and Peter Kennard — have been longstanding supporters of the left in this country. Others we were meeting for the first time.

The Stop the War Coalition logo was created early on in the campaign and has defined the movement in the same way as the CND symbol did in the 1960s and 1980s. Over half a million badges of various designs have been produced (by Better Badges — who are only still in business because of us) and sold.

Without any big money backers the movement has relied on publicity from leafleting and flyposting by our members. A number of graphic artists have worked with us to produce this material. David Gentlemen's "NO" design for 15 February became the most recognised, and David has gone on to design posters and placards for all our large demonstrations. For 15 February we produced over 10,000 of the "NO" placards — Husniye Akpiner ran the team assembling them over several days. Others produced a special series of posters for the campaign — Steve Bell, Martin Rowson, Peter Kennard, Ralph Steadman, Clifford Harper and Jamie Reid. Radical graffiti artist Banksy brought handmade placards to 15 February which he handed out to school students. These placards now retail for hundreds of pounds in the art world. Alan Kitching, from the Royal College of Art, produced a "Why Iraq? Why now?" poster signed by several hundred people from the arts world. Leon Kuhn worked tirelessly

for the movement producing photomontages that were used in many different ways to raise money for the campaign. Writer China Miéville donated the proceeds from a short story, and Michael Moore sponsored coaches from Manchester.

Music was important. Emily Eavis, daughter of Michael Eavis who founded the Glastonbury Festival, put together a "One Big No" concert at Shepherd's Bush Empire. Chris Martin, Fran Healy, Faithless and Paul Weller all performed there. Musicians Mudge and Kelly produced two fundraising CD compilations, and put on a "Peace Not War" concert at the Hackney Ocean held over four nights with 70 bands. Music became part of the rallies. Fran Healy from Travis played on the 22 March demonstration. Violinist Nigel Kennedy played in Trafalgar Square on the first anniversary of the war. As he played, thousands of black balloons were released to represent those who had died. Billy Childish sang a cappella at the Bush demonstration, as did Celia Stothard with a beautiful rendition of "Joe Hill". Others included GM Baby and Peter Doherty who played an acoustic set at the ESF rally, which the Stop the War Coalition organised. Even Tony Benn's speeches at the rallies have been set to dub music. Sir Peter Maxwell Davies offered his support.

These are just some of those who have contributed with their creative output. They were swamped by the outpouring of poetry, music, video and art from others — the footsoldiers of the movement.

Before our first large demonstration on 28 September 2002 coverage of the anti-war movement had been poor. Media Workers Against the War responded to this by arranging a series of meetings and debates. Early on they had built a large meeting with Paul Foot, John Pilger and Rosie Boycott. As the arguments against the war began to gain currency the press began to take a greater interest. Two national newspapers took a broadly anti-war position — the *Independent* and the *Mirror*. Journalists from both papers became close to the campaign. The *Mirror*, under the editorship of Piers Morgan, moved away from celebrity tittle-tattle to more serious coverage of the Iraq war. As it became obvious that 15 February was going to be a historic day we were invited to the *Mirror's* Canary Wharf headquarters to discuss how the paper could help. They sponsored the demonstration and produced several thousand of their own *Mirror* placards. They produced a four-page guide to the march with "15 reasons why you should march", and a complete listing for all the events on 14 February. Their reporter Justine Smith almost became part of our campaign team. Journalist Hugh O'Shaughnessy gave us £1,000 out of the blue, at a time when we were really short of money.

Al Jazeera were ever present and Sky carried reports of our work continuously. The BBC were more difficult. Their coverage was almost all uncritically pro-war (to the extent that we arranged a series of demonstrations outside White City and Portland Place — and Andrew Murray debated with the deputy director of BBC news, Mark Damazer). At the *Mirror*, Piers Morgan also lost his job after he published some fake pictures of Iraqi prisoners being tortured by British soldiers. Real pictures are now emerging. *Guardian* journalists Seumas Milne and Gary Younge wrote many articles exposing the poverty of the pro-war arguments.

A series of celebrity press conferences was arranged jointly with CND and MAB. Damon Albarn, Bianca Jagger, Ken Loach and Mark Steel attended, as did Richard Rogers and Charles Jencks who set up Architects Against the War, a group that included some of the most prominent architects in the world — Zaha Hadid, Rem Koolhaas, Frank Gehry, Terry Farrell and Will Alsop.

After the war the creative community continued to work with the Coalition. The street art that Ruth Boswell and Sue Louise collected was the foundation for our month-long art exhibition. "Pax Britannica — A Hellish Peace" took place in March and April 2004. Contributors included Sir Anthony Caro, Richard Hamilton, Ralph Steadman, John Keane, Jenny Matthews, Peter Kennard and Banksy. The exhibition also featured the cartoon art through which both Steve Bell and Martin Rowson had been lampooning the war. During the exhibition Bruce Kent organised anti-war film and poetry evenings. Liz Heavenstone organised a "Words of Mass Resistance" evening at St James's Church with readings by Ken Loach, Michael Mansfield, Louise Christian, Richard Wilson, George Galloway and many others. She also organised a Christmas benefit concert in December 2004 with John Hegley, Carol Grimes and Bob Davenport.

In November 2004 the Coalition worked with CND and Child Victims of War to produce a series of events to coincide with the US election. A classical concert at the Hackney Empire arranged by Ruth Boswell and Jan Woolf brought over the Moscow Piano Trio. This was followed by a "Poets for Peace" evening arranged by Celia Mitchell, which included Terry Jones, Adrian Mitchell, Brian Patten and Jonathan Pryce. The most impressive of these events was "Naming the Dead", which took place in Trafalgar Square. Campaigners came together with actors, scientists and others to read some of the names of those killed in Iraq — these names included not just Iraqis but also British and American soldiers. Rose Gentle read the name of her son Gordon and Iraqi exile Hani Lazim the name of his cousin killed in Iraq that very week. Stephen Hawking came from Cambridge to read names. Before reading some of the names of those killed he made a statement: "This war was based on two lies. The first was that we were endangered from weapons of mass destruction. The second was that Iraq was somehow to blame for 9/11. It has been a tragedy for all of the families that have lost members; as many as 100,000 have died, half of them women and children. If this is not a war crime, what is it?"

Accompanying Stephen that night was Joseph Rotblat, who won the Nobel Prize in 1995 for a lifetime's work against nuclear weapons. Although 96 years old, Joseph also came to read names. Boxer Chris Eubank, a longtime supporter of the Coalition, was there. On previous occasions Chris had protested by using the rather large truck he drives to block the entrance to Downing Street. Dozens of other celebrities read that night, including Juliet Stevenson, Neil Pearson, Susie Orbach and Ken Livingstone, along with many members of the public. It was a moving and very sad occasion. "Naming the Dead" took place not only throughout Britain but internationally, with readings in Italy, Switzerland, Australia, Spain, Sweden and Iraq itself.

This short section can only be a partial account of events organised and participants. Possibly someone one day will do a whole book just on the contribution of the artistic and scientific communities. Already Ian McEwan has written a novel set within a single day — Saturday 15 February.

Many thousands played their part in building the anti-war movement and giving it creative expression. For me this has been a unique experience. I am privileged to have been able to work in the Stop the War Coalition — and would like to thank Andrew Murray and Lindsey German who held the whole thing together, and of course Chris, Ghada, Kate, John, Carol, Linda, Jane, Niall, Jeremy...

Andrew Burgin

The Bombs

The United States is a monster out of control. Unless we challenge it with absolute determination American barbarism will destroy the world. The country is run by a bunch of criminal lunatics, with Blair as their hired Christian thug. The planned attack on Iraq is an act of premeditated mass murder.

Here's a poem. It's called "The Bombs":

*There are no more words to be said
All we have left are the bombs
Which burst out of our head
All that is left are the bombs
Which suck out the last of our blood
All we have left are the bombs
Which polish the skulls of the dead*

In fact there are at least two more words to be said. The first is "resistance". And the second I address to Tony Blair: "Resign! Resign! Resign!"

© Harold Pinter speaking at Hyde Park, 15 February 2003.
Also published in *War* (Faber and Faber Ltd, 2003).

The poem is a dear old poem, but I've rewritten it a little because war doesn't change, just the location.

To whom it may concern,
 I was run over by the truth one day.
 Ever since the accident I've walked this way.
 So I'll stick my legs in plaster.
 Tell me lies about Iraq.
 I heard the alarm clock screaming with pain,
 Couldn't find myself so I went back to sleep again.
 So, fill my ears with silver,
 Stick my legs in plaster,
 Tell me lies about Iraq.
 Every time I shut my eyes,
 All I see is flames.
 I made a marble phone book,
 And I carved all the names.
 So, coat my eyes with butter,
 Fill my ears with silver,
 Stick my legs in plaster,
 Tell me lies about Vietnam.
 I smell something burning.
 Hope it's just my brains.
 They're only dropping peppermints and daisy chains.
 So, stuff my nose with garlic.
 Coat my eyes with butter,
 Fill my ears with silver,
 Stick my legs in plaster,
 Tell me lies about Iraq.
 Where were you at the time of the crime?
 Down by the Cenotaph, drinking slime.
 So, chain my tongue with whisky,
 Stuff my nose with garlic,
 Coat my eyes with butter,
 Fill my ears with silver,
 Stick my legs in plaster,
 Tell me lies, lies about Iraq.
 You put your bombers in,
 Put your conscience out,
 You take the human being in,
 And you twist it all about.
 So, scrub my skin with women,
 Chain my tongue with whisky,
 Stuff my nose with garlic,
 Coat my eyes with butter,
 Fill my ears with silver,
 Stick my legs in plaster,
 And tell me lies, Mr Blair,
 Tell me lies, Mr Bush,
 Tell me lies and lies and lies,
 Tell me lies about Iraq.

Adrian Mitchell speaking at Hyde Park, 15 February 2003.
 Latest poems published in *The Shadow Knows: Poems 2000-2004* (Bloodaxe Books, 2004).

Initial Illumination

Farne cormorants with catches in their beaks
 shower fishscale confetti on the shining sea.
 The first bright weather here for many weeks
 for my Sunday G-Day train bound for Dundee,
 off to St Andrew's to record a reading,
 doubtful in these dark days, what poems can do,
 and watching the mists round Lindisfarne receding
 my doubt extends to Dark Age Good Book too.
 Eadfrith the Saxon scribe/illuminator
 incorporated cormorants I'm seeing fly
 round the same island thirteen centuries later
 into the *In principio*'s initial I.
 Billfrith's begemmed and jewelled boards got looted
 by raiders gung ho for booty and beserk,
 the sort of soldiery that's still recruited
 to do today's dictators' dirty work,
 but the initials in St John and in St Mark
 graced with local cormorants in ages,
 we of a darker still keep calling Dark,
 survive in those illuminated pages.
 The word of God so beautifully scripted
 by Eadfrith and Billfrith the anchorite
 Pentagon conners have once again conscripted
 to gloss the cross on the precision sight.
 Candlepower, steady hand, gold leaf, a brush
 were all that Eadfrith had to beautify
 the word of God much bandied by George Bush
 whose word illuminated midnight sky
 and confused the Baghdad cock who was betrayed
 by bombs into believing day was dawning
 and crowed his heart out at the deadly raid
 and didn't live to greet the proper morning.

Now with noonday headlights in Kuwait
 and the burial of the blackened in Baghdad
 let them remember, all those who celebrate,
 that their good news is someone else's bad
 or the light will never dawn on poor Mankind.
 Is it open-armed at all that victory V,
 that insular initial intertwined
 with slack-necked cormorants from black laquered sea,
 with trumpets bulled and bellicose and blowing
 for what men claim as victories in their wars,
 with the hire-hailing cock and all those crowing
 who don't yet smell the dunghill at their claws?

© Tony Harrison

New Word Hawdah

di killahs a Kigale¹
 mus be sanitary workaz
 di butchaz a Butare²
 mus be sanitary workaz
 di savajiz a Shatila³
 mus be sanitary workaz
 di beasts a Boznia
 mus be sanitary workaz
 inna di new word hawdah

like a dutty ole bandige
 pan di festahrin fæe a umanity
 di ole hawdah anravel an reveal
 ole scar jus bruk out inna new sore
 primeval woun dat time wone heal
 an in di hainshent currency of blood
 tribal tyrants a seekle de score

di killahs a Kigale
 mus be sanitary workaz
 di butchaz a Butre
 mus be sanitary workaz
 di savajiz a Shatila
 mus be sanitary workaz
 di beasts a Boznia
 mus be sanitary workaz
 inna di new word hawdah

an is di same ole eain an able sindrome
 far more hainshent dan di fall of Rome
 but in di new world hawdah a atrocity
 is a brand new langwidje a barabrity

mass murdah
 narmalize
 pogram
 rationalize
 genocide
 sanitize
 an di hainshent elan sin
 now name etnic elenzin

an soh
 di killahs a Kigale
 mus be sanitary workaz
 di butchaz a Butare
 mus be sanitary workaz
 di savajiz a Shatila
 mus be sanitary workaz
 di beasts a Boznia
 mus be sanitary workaz
 pra-pram-pram
 inna di new word hawdah

- (1) Region in central Rwanda where Hutus carried out genocide against Tutsis in 1994.
 (2) Region in southern Rwanda where Hutus carried out genocide against Tutsis in 1994.
 (3) Palestinian refugee camp where refugees were butchered by Phalangist Christian militia in Lebanon in 1982. The area was under the control of the government of Israel at the time.

(c) Linton Kyesi Johnson, originally published in *Mi Revalueshanary Fren: Selected Poems* by Linton Kyesi Johnson (Penguin, 2002).
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YOU & I –
 To my "Fundamentalist" friends

You want to speak of War
 I want to speak of Peace.

You say Punish
 I say Forgive

You speak of God's Wrath
 I speak of His Mercy

Your Quran is a Weapon
 My Quran is a Gift

You speak of the Muslim
 brotherhood
 I speak of the brotherhood of Man

You like to Warn others
 I like to Welcome them

You like to speak of Hell
 I like to speak of Heaven.

You talk of Lamentation
 I talk of Celebration.

You worship the Law
 I worship the Divine.

You want Silence
 I want Music

You want Death
 I want Life

You speak of Power
 I speak of Love.

You search out Evil
 I warm to the Good

You dream of the Sword
 I sing of the Rose petal

You say the world is a Desert
 I say the world is a Garden

You prefer the Plain
 I prefer the Adorned

You want to Destroy
 I want to Build

You want to go Back
 I want to move Forward

You are busy Denying
 I am busy Affirming

Yet there might be one thing
 on which we see eye to eye

You want Justice
 So do I.

© Mahmood Jamal, November 2001
 Performed at Poetry Against the War,
 14 February 2003.
 Video and audio clips of this and other
 poems are available from
www.57productions.com

Kill Them Before Ramadan

Ramadan is a time for reflection
Contemplation and meditation.
It is a time when the Muslims of Iraq
(Like the Muslims of London)
Give thanks for their existence.
The soul is cleansed by prayer (they say)
And the body by fasting.
Families unite in honour of the family.
The Islamic mind now reaffirms
That there is but one God
And God is great.
So we must (we are told)
Kill them before Ramadan.

In the houses of Baghdad
They are preparing to proclaim
That Allah is eternal
Allah is absolute,
The most bountiful
The cherisher,
So before they have the opportunity
To tell him that he is,
Before the gracious and most merciful is praised
We must be merciless.
Before their Korans open their hearts
Before their hearts are filled with their beliefs
We should do the right thing,
We must
Kill them before Ramadan.

Evacuate the Europeans
Let us pray for us,
As Ramadan and Christmas unite
Let our rulers know that God is on our side,
And God knows we love Christmas.
But someone must be unfortunate enough
To live under a rogue regime,
Someone has to be a threat to humanity,
Someone has to be The Other.
Our modern economy paid for modern soldiers,
Brave and fearless teenagers
Resolute and steadfast from the Projects and the
Council Estates,
Fearing no one but the president of the world
And the God who made his sex drive,
We must
Kill them before Ramadan.

Great hypocrites shed your plutonium tears,
Make yourself believe that you regret your actions.
Why should you not believe that
Your great Britain is mighty independent
And that every missile is on target,
And every target is military,
And all those innocent victims
Are not really innocent victims?
Why should you not believe
That the only innocent victims
Are your innocent victims?
Great hypocrites
Tell your children that you are right.

Make sure they have more than enough clean drinking
water

Candy at the appropriate times
And do not forget to set the central heating correctly.
Let them enjoy their childhood,
Do not tell them that Iraqi children shit themselves
Every time the President of the United States has an
erection.
Let us slide into our tabloid truth
Let us impress the Israelis,
Let us pray to God and ask him to bless our boys,
Let us remember that some Iraqis are Christians,
Let us kill them before Ramadan.

In London and Glasgow
In New York and Boston
Wives wait in agony
Mothers are on edge,
Professors of war studies
And lecturers of modern history all agree,
Saddam is bad
Saddam is bad.
In London and Glasgow
In New York and Boston
Muslims are praying in agony
Muslims are living on the edge,
And the Muslims
And the Christians all agree,
War is bad
War is bad.

The "Desert Fox" is no longer sly but illogical,
It kills with confidence and no longer requires a UN
mandate,
Left in a corner to dry "The Allies" are an unnecessary
umbrella now.
As the president is impeached
And bombs are decorated in Kuwait
We must tell our enemy that we know
God created them from a mere clot of congealed blood,
Let us tell them that we too believe in Allah,
We too have stories about Abraham, Jacob, Isaac and
the tribes,
We even have Muslim friends
And token Muslim lords and ladies.
Let them know this is our globalisation,
And let them know
Dis is not a war, dis is a bombing,
But we do not want to hurt their holiness
Intrude on their spirituality
Or disrespect their religion
So we must
Kill them before Ramadan.

Oh my God it's Ramadan.

Dear Soldier
Would you like the opportunity to earn some overtime
pay?

© Benjamin Zephaniah
Too Black, Too Strong (Bloodaxe Books, 2001)

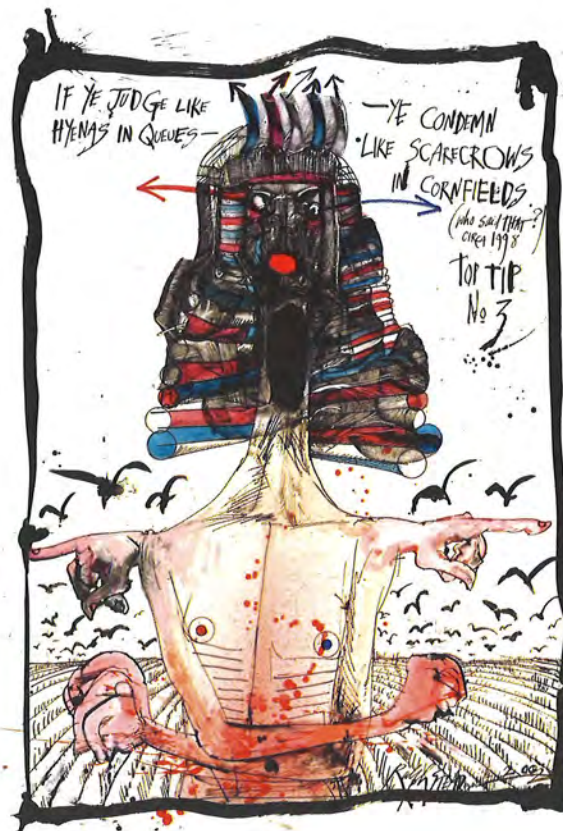
Thousands of people in the anti-war movement have produced a huge range of artistic work. The following pages reproduce just some of them, which are listed below in order

Catriona Foote. Stop the War logo
Peter Kennard. Death Mask
Peter Kennard. Saint
Ralph Steadman. J'accuse
Ralph Steadman. Poets for Peace flyer
Ralph Steadman. Pax Britannica flyer
Ralph Steadman. Crucifix
Ralph Steadman. Triptych
Ralph Steadman. How I'd Like My
Halliburton?
Jamie Reid. Peace is Tough
Banksy. Wrong War
Leon Kuhn. Mad Dogs and Englishmen
Leon Kuhn. Big Ben
Leon Kuhn. Capitalism
Noel Douglas. Regime Change playing cards
Martin Rowson. Nye Who?
Martin Rowson. The War of Blair's Ear
Steve Bell. Dossier
Steve Bell. Violence is Wrong
Antonio Pacitti. Guantanamo Bay
Gee Vaucher. Your Country Needs You
Jess Hurd. Military Families Against the
War at Downing Street. 10 November 2004
Jess Hurd. London Demonstration.
15 February 2003
Liz Heavenstone. Placards
Jess Hurd. We Topple Bush.
20 November 2003
Paul Mattsson. Halloween Mask.
31 October 2002
Guy Smallman. Vigil at Parliament.
Invasion of Iraq. 20 March 2003
Matt Saywell. Child With NO Placard.
15 February 2003
Guy Smallman. The Madness of King Tony
Jess Hurd. If War is the Answer...
Anniversary of the Invasion of Iraq.
20 March 2004

Richard Searle. School Students on the
National Demonstration. 28 September 2002
Mark Pinder. Child With Bush and Blair
Sign. Newcastle. 20 March 2003
Paul Mattsson. Woman in US Flag
Ami Vitale. Diyarkabir, Turkey.
21 March 2003
Martin Sasse. Babylon, Iraq.
21 February 2003
Abir Abdullah. Stop the War Vigil, Dhaka.
Bangladesh. 5 April 2003
Anna Pomaska. San Francisco, US.
26 October 2002
David Gentleman. NO poster
David Gentleman. Blair placard
Ray Smith. David Gentleman (left), with
Lindsey German and George Galloway
David Gentleman. Demonstration With NO
Placards
Peter Robinson. Stop the War Coalition
Halloween poster
Catriona Foote. Stop the War Coalition 28
September demonstration poster
Daily Mirror. front pages. editor Piers
Morgan
Ed Hall. Peter Doherty in Trafalgar Square







The great actor, Jonathan Pryce, introduces a one-a-minute lineup of star poets on November 4th at the Conway Hall, London.

There's Jean "Binta" Breeze, the blues poet, and veteran pacifist Adrian Mitchell (Shakespeare Laureate), Michele Roberts, the Anglo-French poet, Booker shortlisted novelist and gourmet columnist, and Christopher Logue, who first galvanised the British poetry scene in the 1950s and is still shocking and thrilling us with his versions of Homer's Iliad.

There is Liverpool's Brian Patten, who is everybody's favourite love poet as well as a hugely popular writer for children. And ex-Python Terry Jones - giving us some of his outrageous, delightful poems.

There will be poems about the war, though this is not agitprop but a life-affirming and enjoyable reading to help us through these terrible times. Jonathan Pryce, fresh from his role in the West End hit, Edward Albee's *The Goat*, will introduce the poets and also read translations of Iraqi poems.

Poets For Peace is organised by the Stop The War Coalition alongside CND. Profits will go to the children of Iraq and to the continuing campaign for peace in the Middle East.

Tickets are £11 to include a glass of wine. The trouble begins at 7.30pm. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC2 on November 4th.

POETS FOR PEACE

featuring
Jean Binta Breeze
Terry Jones
Christopher Logue
Adrian Mitchell
Brian Patten
Michele Roberts
and introduced by Jonathan Pryce
Thursday November 4th 2004, 7.30pm
Conway Hall Red Lion Square WC2
TICKETS £11 includes glass of wine
020 000 7734 8902 or email: poetsforpeace@conwayhall.co.uk



Everything wrong is more wrong. Every grudge anyone already holds, every wound suffered, every suffering dominating every wretched life, has been exacerbated, and torn open, to bleed and fester yet again. Nothing has been solved. The billions spent were needed to save an impoverished world from disease, starvation and oppression.

No more fearful images of war, inhumanities, violent intimations, threats, bogus claims, paranoia, froth. No more scenarios, resignations, palpitations, revelations, solutions or resolutions. United Nations, militaristic calculations. No munitions, coalitions, no insane talk of nuclear fission. No more banalities, profanities, collateral fatalities.

No war, no raw, no more, and for pity's sake, no hideous thoughts of blood and gore. Have these flowers and damn the name of superpowers...

Ralph Steadman



